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HINDU ETHICS

PRINCIPLES OF HINDU RELIGIO-SOCIAL REGENERATION.

(12)

BY

BABU GOVINDA DAS

Author of "Hinduism" & "Governance of India."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

BABU BHAGAVAN DAS

EDITED BY

MAHAMAHOPADHYAYA GANGANATHA JHA.

Vice-Chancellor, Allahabad University.

FIRST EDITION

G. A. NATESAN & CO., MADRAS.

PRICE RS. TWO.

HINDUISM

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IN this remarkable treatise Babu Govinda Das, the well-known writer and Sanskrit scholar depicts the character and genius of Hinduism through the centuries. The book deals with the sources of Hinduism, its fundamental teachings, its rites and customs, and it will be found invaluable to students of comparative religion, social reformers and legislators.



Writing of the purpose of the book, the learned author observes: "The idea underlying the composition of the book has been that of the great principle that whatever makes for unification, for sympathy, for expansion, for enlightenment, for toleration, for freedom is to be encouraged: and all that makes against these, that is in fact, separative, destructive, narrowing, productive of hatred and strife, curtails liberty, encourages superstition and credulity is to be discouraged. * * Another object in writing this book has been to induce my stay at-home or merely book-learned fellow-religionists into taking a broad-minded and tolerant view of religious and social schisms. * *

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Rs. 3. To Subs. of the "Indian Review," Rs. 2-8.

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

A MELANCHOLY interest attaches to the publication of this work which was intended by the author to be a companion volume to his well known book on "Hinduism." Mr. Govinda Das was busy preparing the copy for the press soon after the publication of the other book, but death intervening, the new volume could not see the light of day. Happily his literary remains were entrusted to the care of his great friend and admirer Dr. Ganganath Jha, whose learning and scholarship entitle him to deal with the copy in a manner worthy of his lamented friend. It is a great satisfaction that this work has been completed under the immediate guidance of Dr. Jha, and the Publishers desire to express their thanks to him not only for revising the copy and passing the proofs but also for his Foreword. Need it be added that with him it has all been a labour of love!

The Publishers also desire to take this opportunity to thank Babu Bhagavan Das (brother of Babu Govinda Das) for the very informing Introduction prefixed to this volume. Apart from his well-known scholarship, Babu Bhagavan Das's intimacy with his brother's mind makes his Introduction of exceptional value.

A Sun but dimly seen,
Here, till the mortal morning mists of Earth,
Fade in the noon of heaven, when creed and race,
Shall bear false witness, each of each no more,
But find their limits by that larger light,
And overstep them, moving easily,
Thro' after-ages in the love of Truth,
The truth of Love.

Tennyson's 'Akbar.'

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FOREWORD

IT was in the month of June 1906, that Babu Govinda Das began to think of the two books on Hinduism; and seated on the bank of the sacred river at Hardwar within 4 or 5 feet of the swift-flowing current, he jokingly invited me to be his 'Ganesha,' referring to the account of the writing of the Mahabharata which was written down by Ganesha, to the dictation of the author, Vyasa. Ever since then, several have been the occasions on which I acted the 'Ganesha' for him; and it is only in continuation of the duties of that office that, with the help of my friend's esteemed brother, Babu Bhagavan Das and his loved son, Babu Srinivas, I prepared the 'copy' of this work and have seen it through the Press. The great pity of the thing is that while 'Ganesha' is still dragging his existence in the world, Vyasa himself has gone away—thus belying the character of the Vyasa of the Mahabharata who is believed to be still living, in the company of Ashvatthama, Bali, Hanuman, Vibhisana, Kripa and Parashurama. My only hope is that this last service that I have been able to render to my departed friend will prove as satisfactory to him as all the rest of my work was to him while he was with us.

An apology is necessary for the absence of diacritical marks in the book. My friend used to say that

the use of these marks is too pedantic for a book intended for the general reader; instead of helping, it hinders his smooth reading. It is in obedience to this opinion that I have eschewed the use of the marks.

THE UNIVERSITY:
ALLAHABAD,
Nov. 4th. '27.

GANGANATHA JHA.

INTRODUCTION.

PERSONAL.

MY elder brother, the author of this book was sixty years of age at the time of his passing. I was two years younger. Out of our fifty-eight years of unbroken affection and collaboration, in play, in private life, in public work, he asked me (by letter, from the sea-side town of Vizagapatam, also known as Waltair), a few weeks before leaving this earth, to write an Introduction for this book. He had been working at it off and on, for some years. Because of worsening illness he now felt it would be his last work; and he wished that his name and mine might appear together on its title-page. He became very ill at Vizagapatam in April, 1926, lingered on there for another two months, came up to Benares on the 14th June, 1926, and departed this life on the 23rd of the same month. I reverently obey his last wish, which has made me glad and sad at the same time.

My brother was a martyr to asthma since his earliest youth. The cold of Benares, where the thermometer has been known to go down to 29° in the nights of exceptionally severe winters, in January and February, always aggravated his trouble. He was therefore compelled to spend every winter in the milder climate of Vizagapatam, for the last twenty-five years of his life. Yet he struggled against this disheartening

and disabling handicap for over forty years, courageously did more than his fair share of public duty, and made his contribution towards the uplift of the motherland.

THE AUTHOR'S INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES.

He served the town of his birth—perhaps the oldest living historical town on the surface of the earth, the principal centre of Samskrit learning, as also of Hinduism in all its forms, noble as well as vile, broad, philosophical, all-embracing, as well as narrow, bigotted, degenerate and corrupt—he served this town in the capacity of municipal commissioner and honorary magistrate for twelve years.

THE AGRAWAL SAMAJ OF BENARES.

He was the chief founder, and the life-president of the Agrawal Samaj of Benaras, which has, in the thirty-one years of its existence, since its birth on the 21st of September, 1895, rendered a great deal of social service to the Agrawal community (a sub-caste of the Vaishyas). This community counts about five hundred families in Benares; and the Agrawal Samaj has been giving free education to its children, financial help to its poor widows, and loans of ceremonial furniture to its families for occasions of marriage and other ritual functions.

THE OUTCASTING OF THE AUTHOR: OPPONENTS AND SUPPORTERS.

It is particularly noteworthy, and illustrative of the grievous need for the reform on which this book insists, that this very community, which he served so well,

showed its 'gratitude' to him by putting him "out of caste," together with all his brothers and all the members of their families! For what? For the enormous sin of associating and dining with some members of the sub-caste, who had been to England and other parts of Europe, for special education, for increase of useful knowledge! This ex-communication made in 1910, with the "Shastraic" support of some Maha-Mahopadhyayas and other Pandits, is still in force in Benares. But, fortunately for the hopes of intelligent progress and reform and of revival of rationality within the fold of Hinduism, it has been ignored and condemned in all the other important towns of North India, where thousands of families of this sub-caste have residence. And a number of learned Pandits also sided with my brother and spoke against the excommunication, and (in the course of the civil suit which, as a test, and for education of public opinion, my brother brought against the principal excommunicators, and fought up to the English Privy Council, but ultimately lost) quoted chapter and verse to show that sea-voyaging was not an inexpiable sin but permissible for good purposes, according to the so-called *Shastras* even. And to us, the members of his family, it has been a great gratification that after his passing, some well-known Pandits of Benares held a public meeting and eulogised the services he had rendered to the cause of Samskrit learning and the personal help that he had given in many ways to many Pandits and *Vidyarthis*.

THE NAGARI PRACHARINI SABHA OF BENARES.

Two years before the birth of the Agrawal Samaj, my brother became, on 16th July 1893, one of the founders of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Benares. This Sabha has branches now in many important towns of India, is recognised on all hands as among the foremost literary societies of the country, and has done an immense amount of good work, by critical research, collection of manuscripts, and publication of valuable old and new books, including a "Manoranjan" series which has passed the fiftieth volume. It has also compiled and published a standard grammar, an encyclopædic dictionary, and scientific glossaries, etc., for the promotion of the Hindi language and literature. This language, it is now generally recognised, is destined, in the form of Hindustani, i. e., with a due admixture of Urdu, to form the *lingua franca* of India.

And Hindi literature has made astonishing progress during thirty-three years that the N. P. Sabha has been in existence, and now counts to its credit, a few good dailies, a somewhat larger number of weeklies, a considerable number of monthly magazines (some of them quite respectable, thoroughly readable, very informative, and well illustrated), and many hundreds of new books on different subjects, though not as yet, by far, sufficient in kind or number, to raise the general level of public intelligence, in respect of scientific and mundane matters, to the European standard.

THE HARISHCHANDRA HIGH SCHOOL OF BENARES.

My brother was also one of the founders of the re-organised and very greatly enlarged Harishchandra High School of Benares, in 1907. This School was founded originally in 1864, by Harishchandra, the famous Hindi poet, who was born, lived and died in Benares. Harishchandra was a contemporary of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, and anticipated, in his writings of fifty years ago some of the most up-to-date ideas of social reform of to-day; he became the father of the best new Hindi style in prose and poetry, and an admiring and grateful public gave to him, after his premature death in 1885, at the age of only thirty-five years, the title of "Bharat-endu", "the Moon of India". My brother and I began our schooling in his School, and therefore always bore it in mind with affection.

THE CENTRAL HINDU COLLEGE AND THE BENARES HINDU UNIVERSITY.

My brother was also, together with Mrs. Annie Besant, one of the principal founders and builders-up of the Central Hindu College of Benares. This college began its existence on 7th July, 1898, and, during the period of its management by a Board of Trustees and a Managing Committee, did more perhaps than any other single institution of the land for the rationalisation and liberalisation of Hinduism, in the mind of the new generation, and the solidarisation of the endlessly divided Hindus, by the special tone and spirit which it infused into the education of its *alumni*, and by the

graduated series of three text-books of Hinduism which it published and spread broadcast over the country, in English as well as in several of the living languages of India. Though affiliated to the Allahabad University —for the then conditions of thought and feeling in the country did not allow of adventure on a completely independent system of education—the Central Hindu College scrupulously avoided taking any financial help from the Government. It did so in order to have as much liberty to make new experiments and as much freedom from control by the Governmental Education Department, as was compatible with affiliation, to the Allahabad University. The "King's shilling"—even though provided by the people themselves—yet brings, in its train, the thumb of the king's martinet in the people's pie to a very uncomfortable degree in the present circumstances of India. In England, of course, the principle is well recognised and acted on, that the great educational institutions are not to be made annexes and subordinate departments of the governmental bureau. This same principle is expressed in the old technical Samskrit words by saying that the Brahmana-department of human life and social organisation shall not be subordinate to the Kshatriya-department of the same, but shall, on the contrary, direct and guide it. In 1916-1917 the Central Hindu College was transformed into the Benares Hindu Unversity by a Governmental Act of legislation. My brother remained a member of the Court, the Council, the Senate and various other bodies of the University to the end.

SANSKRIT MSS. AND PUBLICATIONS.

Besides the above activities, a lifelong hobby of my brother's was the collection of rare manuscripts of unpublished and valuable Samskrit works. He gathered them from all parts of India, during his extensive travels in the earlier years, and, later, by correspondence with his very wide circle of friends and acquaintances amongst scholars; and he secured publication for as many of these as possible through sympathetic savants and publishers. The list would be fairly long of the works which he had been instrumental in getting printed, by supplying manuscripts and other help, as acknowledged in preface or introduction by the Editors, in the Bibliotheca Indica Series, the Bombay Samskrit Series, the Benares Chaukhambha Samskrit Series, the various newer Series of Samskrit publications commenced and carried on by several Indian States, the Bombay Nirnaya Sagara Press publications, etc.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

He Joined the Theosophical Society in 1884, helped his lifelong friend Babu Upendranath Basu in the building up of the Indian Section of the Society, from 1894 to 1907, and gave great assistance to Mrs. Annie Besant in the first years of her work in and for this country during that same period, by frequently going round with her, in her tours in the Southern parts of India. But while always giving full allegiance to the published three objects of the T. S., he found himself unable to sympathise with its newer outgrowths of specific personal creed and doctrine, and fell out of

touch, though he never actually resigned membership, and his friendships formed in the earlier days, with members who now differed more or less in beliefs, remained unimpaired to the last.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

A congenital fighter against abuses, and temperamentally rebellious against dictatorial authority, he preached vigorously against priestcraft and caste-superstitions, in his writings and conversations, and also took part in the political life of the country, through membership of the Indian National Congress in its earlier years.

It was always a great regret to us, the other members of the family, that he was so severely handicapped all his life by pulmonary trouble. Otherwise, his wide intellectual interests, enormous reading on all sorts of subjects, retentive memory, and great power of ready rejoinder and apt retort would have easily placed his name among those of the foremost contemporaneous Indian politicians as well as litterateurs. I doubt if there are half-a-dozen scholars in India to-day who know more about Samskrit books and authors than he did. I repeatedly suggested to him to compile a History of Samskirt Literature, which he could have made exceptionally interesting with biographical anecdotes of the authors. But the distractions and breaks caused by his chronic and, during severe attacks, exceedingly painful malady, always stood in the way of steady work requiring close application for a long period.

LITERARY WORK.

Even so he gave two good and important books, besides the present one, to the Indian public. One is *The Governance of India*, which deals with various civic and political problems of this country, and has been very well received by the public. The book has possibly had some influence in the shaping of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (though they have proved sterile for various reasons), as some suggestions contained therein are to be found carried out in the latter. The other work is entitled *Hinduism*; and the present work may be regarded as a supplement to it. He also contributed a long and very interesting introduction in English, embodying much trenchant criticism, to the *Balambhatti (Tika* on the *Mitakshara)* published in the *Chaukhambha Samskrit Series*.

In the two volumes, *Hinduism* and the present work, a great deal of valuable out-of-the-way information has been gathered, much thought-provoking and instructive criticism employed, the degeneracies, aberrations, and superstitions, of the beliefs and practices of current Hinduism pointed out, and useful suggestions made for reform. In these volumes (as also in *The Governance of India)* will be found many brilliant and informative passages, which will prove of use to active social and political reformers.

THE PRESENT WORK: ITS MAIN SUGGESTION.

The present work, as a whole, is a powerful plea, supported by concrete facts and practical suggestions, for the freeing of the daily life of the Hindu from the

octopus-grip of sacerdotal authority, hypocritical priest-craft, and false religiosity. This grip is strangling the progress of the Hindu people (and therefore of all India) in every department of life; has created fierce animosities instead of friendliness between the different sections, endless castes and sub-castes of the Hindus, internally, on the one hand, and, on the other, between them, as a whole, and the incomers from the North and the West: and prevents interchange, between the three civilisations and cultures now clashing instead of fraternising together as they should in India, *viz.*, Hindu, Muslim and Christian of what is really valuable and fundamental in each. This devitalising vampire-grip is the main cause of the inability of the Hindus to resist, repel, and prevent the blows which they are perpetually receiving from all sides; and it is also affecting injuriously, in various ways, direct and indirect, the life and customs of the followers of other creeds also, who dwell in this land, side by side with the Hindus.

WAYS OF REFORM.

The way, recommended in the present work, of direct attack on the current evils, by the separation of 'religion' from 'secular' life, has undoubtedly its own uses. It suits certain national temperaments specially and 'Modern' conditions generally; though if carried to excess, it may become liable to the caricature that religion is kept in the box of Sunday clothes, and is taken out and aired with them, for a couple of hours, once a week.

Another way, not inconsistent with, but supplementary to the above, is to try to convert the false religiosity into real religion; the hypocritical priest-craft into selfless spiritual ministration, the sacerdotal dictation into patriarchal philanthropy—by expounding, and spreading the knowledge of the principles of Universal Religion, Brahmavidya, Atma-vidya. On it, as Manu declares, is founded the whole original Vaidika culture and civilisation. In it, the fundamental concepts of Philosophy, Science, and Art all merge together, to make one consistent whole, which may indifferently be called either the Religion or the Philosophy or the Science or the Art of life. Its unity corresponds to the organic unity and continuity of Nature—Prakriti—Svabhava and Nature's God—Purusha—Siva—Atma—Consciousness—Brahm, whose Nature the world-process is.

THE PERVERSION OF VIRTUES, BY EXCESS, INTO VICE.

It is well-known that any and every virtue, by excess, becomes a vice. The *varna* and *ashrama* scheme is an integral and essential part of Vaidika Dharma, or Hinduism as it is called to-day. It is a very "practical" scheme, based on sound principles of Psychology and Metaphysics. Rightly interpreted it systematises and organises each individual life into four main *natural stages* or periods and the whole of human society into four main *natural vocational classes*. It partitions the exercise of the individualist and the socialist tendencies (both inevitable) of the human being, between the

first two and the second two stages of life respectively. It divides the whole of social labour between the men of knowledge, the men of action, the men of (acquisitive) desire, and the undifferentiated, unskilled labourers---the four inevitable natural estates of every civilised realm—consciously, deliberately, systematically. It also similarly partitions the corresponding means of livelihood, and the prizes and rewards for the due performance of each class of labour, the proper discharge of duty. It attaches a right to every duty; a duty to every right. It thus minimises class jealousies and hatreds and blind and frantic competitions, and maximises sympathetic and intelligent co-operation between all classes. It establishes a 'balance of power' between the classes—far more necessary, far more useful, than between nations. Yet this so virtuous a scheme has, because of excessive insistence upon the factor of 'heredity', (*janma* or *yoni*) and excessive disregard of the more decisive factor of spontaneous variation and idiosyncracy (*Karma*, *vritta*, *shila*, *shrutam*, *tapas*), through unintelligent misunderstanding or cunning selfishness, degenerated into hundreds and thousands of the most senselessly, most ridiculously, most mischievously exclusive *hereditary castes and sub-castes*. The restrictions and partitions, regarding vocations and means of living, are entirely ignored. Persons of any caste or sub-caste pursue any (one or more than one) means of earning livelihood or rather money, that they like. And any one is at liberty to try to grab *all* the great prizes of life, honour,

power, wealth, and play, in equal degree, if he can—whence the bitter class hatreds.

The utterly scientific and reasonable injunctions to be circumspect in diet and marriage, and avoid impurity, have, by excessive exaggeration of one feature, degenerated into a blindly irrational, self-conceited, provocative, antagonising, sympathy-killing, dividing, weakening, caste-biased, mere "touch-me-not-ism"; while all kinds of dirtiness and impropriety in food and in mating are indulged in.

The scientific fact of magnetism has been exaggerated into the most absurd and unverifiable theories about subtle, "invisible" (*a-drishta*) and other-worldly (*para laukika*) consequences of 'food-touching' and 'inter-dining' and 'inter-marrying'; and these theories are advanced as conclusive arguments in support of this 'touch-me-not-ism,' as between not only the different castes but also the different sub-castes; while sanitary and medical precautions with strongly 'visible' (*drishta*) consequences are neglected.

The desire to preserve the purity of the individual and also of "the seed of race" is laudable and virtuous. But it should be fulfilled in rational ways. Irrational, excessive touch-me-not-ism, exclusive hereditarianism, canting sanctimoniousness are sheer vice. These and their bye-product, *viz.* frequent ex-communications on the most trivial charges of breach of caste-rules, constitute the main cause of the lack of solidarity and the utter weakness of the Hindus, and their

consequent shrinkage under the assaults of other more solidarian religious communities.

The wish that pure youth should marry pure maid, and that the new generation should be safe-guarded from sexual sin and vice and crime, also that every girl should be provided with a protector, is a righteous wish. But the marriage of boy-child with girl-child is not the right way to fulfil this wish. Not only does it fail to secure the object aimed at, but creates new and additional evils.

So, the wish that the marriage-bond should be a soul-bond, a spiritual something holy, also, and not merely a matter of the flesh, is a righteous wish. But the enforcing of lifelong singleness on widowed women, often widowed children, only, (with utter license of all kinds to men) and without any regard to individual temperament and surrounding circumstances, is irrational vice, and leads to sin and crime and conversion to other religions which have less unreasonable and iniquitous customs.

Tolerance, for which the 'mild' Hindu is famous, has, by excess, become toleration of, and even active acquiescence in, the grossest vices, abuses, evils of all kinds, provided, the outer appearance of 'touch-me-not-ism' is kept up. Indeed this tolerance has become a cloak for frequent moral and physical cowardliness.

Charity, eulogised in every religion, has in India, by excess, put a premium upon mendicancy, has converted large sections of the people (some, the cleverest) into beggars, idlers and parasites, and is responsi-

ble for the worse than waste of crores of rupees, annually through the mismanagement and vicious and misuse of the funds of temples, *Sattra-s* (alms-houses) *dharma-shata-s* (pilgrim-houses), etc. "Think of the other world also"—very wise counsel—has by excess, become, "Think of the other world *only*; whereby the "fool" is made to neglect and part with his earthly goods, by the "knave" who promptly annexes them.

If even half the money now annually thrown into the gutter, throughout India, in the name of charity, were properly utilised for national, rational, spiritual, scientific, technical and vocational education of the people, India would come rapidly abreast of the Western nations in mundane matters, and restore to herself her precious special possession of spirituality besides. Education is the foundation of civilisation.

Almost as a rule, in modern Hindu India, the effect is made the cause, and the cause the effect, in matters of 'religious' belief and practice. "Take due account of small things also," has come to mean in practice, "Concern yourself with these only." As a consequence, trifles have become overwhelmingly important, and important matters have become trivial. The most effete, and now positively pernicious customs are kept up with insane pertinacity, though the reasons which may have given rise to them originally have long disappeared. A sneeze causes a journey to be postponed, for a little while; a cat running across may cause it to be abandoned altogether; the accidental

trembling of a little house-lizard from roof or wall or to one's limbs, or the perching of a vulture for a moment on one's house-top, are portents which must be exorcised by priests before any other work can be proceeded with. Possibly the idea was that the sneeze indicated a cold in the head, which was not a condition of body favourable to a strenuous journey; and that the misconduct of the animals account that there was something wrong in the house, that it was not kept clean or orderly, and should be cleaned up and put in order. But no such commonsense reasons and explanations are attempted or acted on to-day; superstition, *i.e.*, belief and action without reason, reigns; it is expressly asserted, by leading Pandits and monopolists of 'Sanatana Dharma' that Buddhi (reason,) has no place in Dharma, the letter of the *shastra* must be obeyed. Thus is the Hindu hypnotised and made to live, from his very birth, in an atmosphere of perpetual terror of the most absurd trifles, this-worldly and other-worldly, terror for his body, for his soul, for his caste which can die under a mere touch. What wonder he should be so inefficient and cowardly in many respects, even though many sections of the Hindus have proved themselves brave enough in the field of battle, indeed no whit behind any other soldiers of any other race or country! The wonder, at the Hindu's irrationality, reaches its climax when we remember that he cannot only safely touch but even eat meat, that is to say, a dead animal—and the majority of the Hindus are non-vegetarians without any loss of caste or of virtue, or

even with accession of virtue if the animal has been 'sacrificed' to a god or goddess; but would be utterly defiled, and lose his caste, if he 'inter-dined', of that same cooked dead animal, together with a living fellow-man, but of another caste or sub-caste! Can perversion and stultification of intelligence go further?

"See the things of the flesh with the eyes of the Spirit", "Behold in all things the manifestations of the power of God, Paramatma, the Universal Self and Consciousness"—this is the wise counsel of the deepest and truest religion. How do we see it followed in India to-day? Stocks and stones and images of all kinds, tanks and lakes and rivers, trees and plants, animals of sorts, snakes, monkeys, cows, ghosts and evil spirits—worshipped, *worshipped* and *propitiated*, with offerings of water and rice, and milk and sweets, and flower and fruit, and unguents and money etc.—all of which the officiating 'priest' duly utilises. I have seen, with my own eyes, and with shame and grief unspeakable, a group of Hindu villagers perform such *worship* of a *mill-stone*. Such has been the debasement, or, rather, effacement, of the Hindus' intelligence—by his 'spiritual preceptor and guide.'

Hanuman, the third hero *i. e.*, after Rama and Lakshmana, of the great story of the Ramayana, one of the finest characters in the whole vast range of Hindu legend, is deservedly held in the highest honour by all sections of Hindus, and many make *worship of images* of him too, as is the fatuous way of the Hindus to-day. And they all declare that one of

his greatest feats was *crossing the ocean* between India and Lanka. Yet if a Hindu crosses the ocean to-day, and returns home, he is put "out of caste" by these same admirers of Hanumaṇ! Instead of welcoming back with eager affection and open arms the long-parted brother, instead of honouring his spirit of adventurous enterprise, they refuse to "touch" him, to have anything to do with him—*unless* he expiates the grievous "sin" by parting with the bulk of his possessions to the heads of his sub-caste and the priests; such is the cruel, heartless, and withal suicidally purblind selfishness of the Hindus to-day—under pretext of "religion"! The present work has a section on sea-voyage.

"Veda, Veda", the professors of orthodoxy cry, as they cried in the far off days of Krishna too; witness his condemnation of the वेदवादरताः and yet, out of many millions, there are not five hundred, of the priestly caste, perhaps not one hundred, who really have studied and know the Vedas. Swami Dayanand the founder of the Arya Samaj, who really tried to revive the study of the Vedas, was perhaps worse abused by the "orthodox" than any other. Truly, "methinks the lady doth protest too much."

"Honour the *shastras*"—who can object to this counsel, if *shastra* as rightly interpreted at meaning spirituo-material, psyche-physical, *science*? But when the counsel takes this shape; "I am the sole monopolist of the *shastras*; this particular book, which I declare to be the *shastra*, is the *shastra*; this interpretation which

I put upon this text is the only right interpretation; and you must not exercise your intelligence at all, but must unquestioningly believe and obey what I declare to be the command of the *shastras*"—when this transformation takes place, there indeed the angel becomes the devil, and vampirises the souls of the people. And this is what has been going on for hundreds of years in India now, as it did in Europe, in the Medieval ages.

REASON AS CANONICAL AUTHORITY.

The incessant insistence, 'by the custodians of religion,' the *Dharma-Rakshakas*, now hereditarily self-appointed, the literate members of the priestly caste, upon the unquestionable 'authority' of the *shastras* and of themselves, the *shastra*-monopolists, have hypnotised the Hindus till they have ceased to trust and exercise their own intelligence, and have lost all ability to judge what is *shastra* and what is *not shastra*, what is good and true *shastra* and what is bad and false *shastra*. Wise spiritual guidance has degenerated completely into mere ' Canonical authority, and dictatorialism. The present work says, in effect, that, therefore, the line of reform and progress indicated for India is the same as has been followed by Europe. 'Canonical authority' must be deposed and the 'Age of Reason' enthroned. In Europe, the corruption of Roman Catholicism brought about the abolition of 'Canonical authority', by Protestantism, in social and indeed, in all matters, over large portions of that continent. And the errings of Protestantism, in turn, were corrected by the Rationalists. In India, too, the book suggests, simi-

lar steps have to be taken and will, no doubt, be taken ; indeed, are beginning to be taken, as is clearly evidenced by the wide-spread current movements for social reform though they are not yet free of over-cautious timidity, and, as many progressives think, are making haste too slowly.

THE FURTHER STEP NEEDED.

But while copying whatever may be good in Western ways, we have to remember that the West itself has further steps to take ; and apparently, it is preparing to take them. While 'secular' life there has been freed from 'religious' control, it is being steadily brought more and more under 'scientific', alloyed with or indeed subordinated to mammonist and jingoist, control. The next step—and a vitally important step it is—is that 'science ' which is as yet only the Science of the Finite or Matter', should be completed into the Science of the Infinite Spirit, of the Universal Life and consciousness, the Science of the Self. When that step has been taken (and leading scientists, in most branches, are beginning to recognise the fact, which is fairly obvious if it be only looked at, that consciousness proves the existence of matter, gives to it whatever existence it has, and not *vice versa*) then 'Scientific authority,' which has its own bigotries chauvinisms, superstitions, self-conceits, self-righteousness and legalised tyrannies and cruelties almost as bad as those of ' canonical authority', and more enormous abuses and sins and crimes, as witnessed in the Great war of 1914-18, will be purged of the imperialism

and mammonism which are now corrupting its soul and it will become transformed into the authority of self-evident spiritual wisdom', the *svatah-pramana Brahm-vakya* of the *Veda*', the self-evident God-spell of True Knowledge. For the Universal Self is the most self-evident of all things. Indeed no other thing is self-evident. And the knowledge, the science, that is based upon and flows out of this self, the One True Great God, is more self-evident, if possible, than the deductions of geometry based upon and flowing out of its definitions, axioms and postulates, which, be it noted, derive whatever validity they have from the *consciousness* of the geometrician, for they are all purely intellectual concepts.

THE HIGHER SPIRITUAL RATIONALISM

Therefore, while, no doubt, the Reign of Reason should be inaugurated, or rather restored, in India, the reason ought to be the higher reason, the primal, fundamental, datum of which is the self-evident and changeless, and immortal self. It should not be the lower reason, the data of which are the perishing and therefore unreliable objects of the senses. The Hindus have to be diligently reminded anew, of what they knew very well in the days of the Upanishads, that, in the last resort, it is the mind, heart, soul, spirit (however you call it) of the human being himself which must and does judge between all those rival scriptures, prophets, messiahs, avataras, etc., which and who claim his submission or 'beg his allegiance.' The thousands of conversions that take place daily, from one religion to another, are

irrefragable proof, not that any religion is better than any other, but that the human soul is superior to them all, is judge over them all, can make any it chooses to like (for whatever reason), good, and every other, bad.

MAN HIMSELF GREATER THAN ALL RELIGIONS.

The Hindu becomes a Mussalman, the Mussalman a Christian, the Christian a Hindu again (formerly mostly only through the Arya Samaj or the Prarthana Samaj or some other smaller bodies, which make converts into their own sections of the Hindus and now on a more extensive scale since the Shuddhi movement was started a few years ago) by the thousand, the hundred, the score. Every such conversion blares out the fact that the soul of the convert (whatever the immediate motive it allows itself to be influenced by) has judged that all the scriptures and all the gods or prophets or messiahs or avataras, and all the practices and worships and what not, of the religion which he discards, as so much old and worn-out clothing, are worthless, and those of the religion which he similarly puts on, as so much new clothing, are worthy.

Yet, so blind are human beings, that the convert does not always outwardly and expressly realise that he himself is the source and the container of all religions! Wonderful is the Maya of the Self, whereby, It forgets Itself, forgets that It is the sovereign of the Universe, and falls prostrate before Its own creatures! It has been observed that the Englishman makes a law and then falls down prostrate before it. This is true not only of the Englishman and his law, but of every

particular sectarian religion and every man who professes it; and of the Hindu religion, as practised to-day, it is true in an especial degree.

Yet it is the profoundest and at the same time the most obvious of truths that no outer God makes man, but man makes all the gods and *nabis, rasuls, messiahs, avataras* and all the *Vedas, Bibles,* and *Qurans.* They are such only to him who believes them to be such. The *belief* of the man *makes* them what they are, even more directly than the most powerful and wonderful machines are made by the scientific skill of the man. The one true God, the "Great God", Maha-deva, Allaho-Akbar, Param-Eshwara, Param-Atma, is the man him-self, the man's own Self, the Universal Self of man and of all things. All the scriptures say this, Veda, Old and New Testament, Quran; and all the teachers, *avataras, rishis, messiahs, nabis, rasuls, paighambars.*

Such is the quintessence of the Atma-vidya, on the foundation of which, the elders, the seers, the wise men of that People which now goes by the name of Hindu, but formerly went by the name of Arya, or even only 'Manava' (*i.e.*, Man, the child of Manu, " Mind ") planned out that socio-religious polity and civilisation which is known as the Sanatana Dharma, Vaidika Dharma, Varnashrama Dharma.

But their self-proclaimed descendants of to-day, the self-appointed monopolists of Dharma, have forgotten the essence of Atma-vidya, Self-knowledge, which is the only permanent source of genuine self-

respect and self-reliance and self-government, spiritual as well as political. Having forgotten it, they are naturally unable to make application of the principles arising from it, in detail, to the affairs of human life. Instead, they are committing, and inducing those who put blind faith in them and follow them to commit excesses and imbecilities of all kinds in the name of "religion" and 'shastras.' Whereas, if properly studied, understood, and progressively *developed*, with growing knowledge and changing circumstance, with watchful and critical intelligence, the *shastras*, are, or at least ought to be, the same thing as the "sciences". To eat and drink and bathe and travel, etc., *religiously*, *should* mean exactly the same thing as to do all these things *scientifically*. But the swamping of *reason* by excess of *faith* converts science into superstition, change living elasticity into the rigidity of death.

WHO IS MAINLY RESPONSIBLE FOR HINDU DEGRADATION.

For all this stultification of the intelligence of the Hindu people as a whole, for the transformation of them from a valiant, enterprising, pioneering, colonising, self-reliant, upright, all-assimilating, all organising, emphatically spiritual, wise, solidarian race, into the heterogeneous horde that it seems to-day, of superstitious, other-dependent, internecine, touch-me-not castes and sub-castes of spiritual and political slaves, bending, bowing, and cowering before stocks and stones, rees, animals, ghosts and spooks, and literate, semi-literate, and illiterate priests of all kinds, in 'religious'

fear, and before foreign invaders and rulers, in 'political' fear—for this lamentable transformation, the priestly class, the custodians of knowledge, the "head" of the social organism, of society as a whole, must be held mainly responsible; As the Manu says: "The eldest is responsible; he makes or mars the family." Of course, the Kshattriya-class, the "arms" of society, went very wrong also, forgot their duty of protection of the weak from being hurt by the strong, their duty of preventing wrong, and corrupted their right of command into the 'right' of despotism and tyranny and vicious luxury and self-indulgence and enjoyments even to the extent of heinous crimes. The Vaishya-class, the 'trunk' of society, also degenerated, and minimised their duty of charity, their duty of equitable distribution of wealth, and maximised their right of accumulation, restricted only by the ruler-robber's periodical plunder. But, allowing all this, the greatest sin must still be held to be that of the class to which the highest *honour* was given, the class which claimed to be the eldest and to have the right to such honour, the *Brahmana* class, who forgot their duty of *tapas* and *vidya* (as enjoined by the Manu), the duty of self-denying asceticism and holding up a constant example of noble conduct and of the incessant gathering and spreading of *right knowledge*; and, instead began to grab *power* and *wealth* and amusement also in addition to honour—the three perquisites of the three 'younger brothers' respectively, and to set a *bad example* and *spread wrong ideas*

whence the erring of all the others, and the degeneration, degradation, and downfall of the Hindus.

When the men of knowledge are also unselfish and self-denying and philanthropic, they are naturally made legislators, the makers of laws (as the Manu says), for they have the trust of the whole people; and rulers and administrators, and even of wealth, and men of labour, all stand in awe of them, and revere them, and try to follow their example, and keep away from evil, and love virtue, and help each other, and so all the people prosper, and earth comes nearer to heaven. Happy is the People which possesses a sufficient number of true *Brahmanas*, true missionaries of Brahm, not by birth but by spiritual temperament and virtuous life and deeds, men of wisdom, that is, of knowledge *plus* philanthrophy. And very unhappy is the people that does not possess, does not come in contact with, does not see any such; it falls rapidly into savagery, (as the Manu says again). True *Brāhmanas* (not by birth but by deed) uplift their fellow-men to heaven; false Brahmanas mislead them into hell, in all times and all climes.

THE REVIVAL.

The perversion of intelligence, and the consequent degeneration, in the fold of Hinduism, has been such that the impartial observer cannot but say that every blow has been amply deserved, that has been received by the Hindus from foreign invaders and aggressors belonging to other religions, during the last twelve hundred years and more since the beginning of

the decline and the gradual disappearance of India, of the great Reform of Dharma made by that greatest of Hindus after Krishna., *viz.*, the Buddha, the Man of Buddhi, the Wise One of the Enlightened Reason *par excellence*.

The supra-conscious oversoul of the Hindu people recognises the greatness of the Buddha and his mission by declaring that he was an incarnation of Vishnu, even as Krishna was—and the two taught, or retaught, exactly the same truth, "Rely on your-Self, on your Buḍdhi"—yet, at the same time the outer mind of the same Hindu people, through the mouth of its 'priesthood,' declares that his teaching was 'deliberately deceptive'! Itself under the overpowering influence of *Maya* it imputes *Maya* to the Enlightened One!

The essential purpose, the sole refrain, of the Bhagavad-Gita is,

बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ... बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ।
तस्माद् भारत युध्यस्व...मामनुस्मर युध्य च ॥

"Seek refuge in Reason; the man who loses reason, is lost, himself; fight against evil strenuously; remember thy Eternal Self, and fight unflinchingly!"

Such is the essence of the teaching of the *Gita*. And the *Gita* is very greatly honoured in the land! But how? By intelligent study and practice of its precepts? No! By only *worshipping* a copy of it with offerings of sandal paste and flowers; or by getting a few verses of it by heart, without understanding their

significance; or by merely going into ecstacies of unctuous eulogy over it; or, finally, if the book is studied at all, then by *perversely mis-interpreting* it, so as to turn it, from a gospel of strenuous just *action* into a gospel of *in-action*, a justification of lazy indolence, and a means of living, at other people's expense, in the garb of the ascetic!

If the Hindu People wish to remain alive and become free from spiritual and political bondage as a Hindu People, then they must cut apart their pseudo-'religion' from their 'secular' life, as advocated in the present work. And they must, simultaneously, re-inaugurate and re-proclaim and re-establish, throughout the length and breadth of the land, the Reign of the Higher Reason, the Scientific as well as Philosophical Reason, the Spiritual Reason, the Atma-Buddhi, the Reason which is firm-based on the Rock of Eternity, the indefeasible consciousness of the Immortal Self, the One and Only Sanatana. Then will the night of superstition disappear in the day of Science—Veda—Knowledge. Then will be justified anew the noble ancient names of the "real-religion" of India, *viz.*, Sanatana—Vaidika — Arya — Bauddha — Manava—Varnashrama Dharma, "the Eternal—Scientific—Noble—Rational—Religion—of—all—Humanity—organised—into one—social—whole."

THE DUAL WAY.

There is no incompatibility between the two ways. Rather, they need each other as supplements and compliments, as negative and positive, as dismantling of the

dangerously cracked and crumbling and rebuilding of the strong and commodious, as weeding of the field and watering of it.

Nor is there any reason to despair. After sunset comes in due course the sunrise. Sometimes darkness at even midday is caused by a temporary eclipse; often is it so caused, in rainy weather; by a deep and dense and dark yet only passing cloud. There are some storms that bring plague and spread epidemics; others clear the atmosphere and sweep away diseases. India is in a mental and moral ferment at the present time. Her struggle for freedom from the leading-strings, the chains, of theocracy and bureaucracy, now advances, now recedes. Elations and depressions succeed one another. And it is right and fitting that she should not be freed until she has proved her *fitness* for freedom—by regaining Self-Knowledge, and thence self-reliance; for these constitute the fitness for, and inevitably bring, self-government in their train, as the *Chhandogya Upanishad* declares expressly. The wish has arisen; the right thought will be born from it before very long. The storm that is blowing seems to be of the right; though there are contrary winds also. In any case the moral condition of India is no worse than that of Europe, though she is lacking very greatly in Science, The Great War of 1914-18 is proof. The Brahmans, Kshattriyas and Vaishyas of Europe, the scientists, the politicals, imperialists, militarists, and the capitalists, are no whit better than, though in other ways, as morally selfish

and perverse as, those of India. Witness the Great War, again. But they are trying hard to learn their lesson—though as yet, unfortunately, in terms of only "the White Race" and not of 'the Brotherhood of all Humanity." Let us try to do better than they. Let us re-learn our lesson of "the Brotherhood of all Humanity," through spiritual Religion. If we do so, we shall not only put our own house in order, and win a new and long and strong lease of life for the Hindu People as such *i.e.*, as followers of Manava-Dharmá, but will convert the current antagonisms of the peoples of at present different-seeming faiths into active sympathy and gradual assimilation of many principles of that Manava Dharma, which they will find useful for themselves. By its own elastic accommodativeness and its absence of provoking exclusiveness and senseless touch-me-not-ism, this revived Manava Dharma will disarm all fanatical hostility, will compel them by the example of its own wise tolerance and reasonableness to also learn tolerance and rationality, and will induce them all to advance, together with itself, towards that Universal Religion of the Supreme Self, Swa-Dharma, Atma-Dharma, the essential principles of which are common to all the great living special religions of to-day and are to be found more or less implicit or explicit in the heart of each.

This combined way, this double way, of clearing away the *Tamasa Buddhi*, the perverse and perverted intelligence, (whence *adharma*, sin and general confusion in human affairs and commencement of

barbarism and thence savagery), and of reviving and re-establishing *Sattvika Buddhi*, the Pure Reason, the Higher Intelligence, is the way of the great Founders, or rather Re-formers of Religion and Civilisation—for the two go together, as "Law" and "Orderliness"—the Krishnas, Vyasas, Zoroasters, Moses' Buddhas', Laotses, Confucius', Christs, Muhammads. And the Hindu people cannot do better than follow that ancient way of Reason as this work recommends in language suited to present conditions. I therefore heartily wish this good little book Godspeed on its mission of re-form.

BENARES,
July 10,1926. BHAGAVAN DAS.

POSTSCRIPT.

On behalf of my departed brother, I perform here the duty, which he would surely have performed, of recording gratitude (1) to his lifelong and dear friend, Dr. Ganganath Jha (now Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University) for much help given in re-arranging many portions of the book, (which my brother's growing illness made it difficult for him to deal with himself) for purely literary purposes, and without being responsible in any way for the ideas; and (2) to his other honoured friend, also of many years, The Hon. Mr. G. A. Natesan (now a Member of the Council of State), who has helped in the intellectualisation of India's struggle for political and social reform and progress, as few others have, by his long series of

valuable publications; who all along took a very great interest in my brother's literary work, and encouraged him therein; and who is now publishing this work, after my brother's departure, out of high-minded and generous appreciation of its quality.

B. D.



GOVINDA DAS. Dr. JHA.

CHAPTER I.

HINDU NATIONALISM.

SECTION I.

THE INFLUENCE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION ON HINDU LIFE

THE impact of the pre-potent and belligerent civilisation of the West is galvanising the whole of India to-day in a way in which it has never before been awakened in the preceding thousands of years. Not even the tidal wave of Moslem fanaticism, which endeavoured ruthlessly to destroy all that it passed over, succeeded in rousing the people to a recognition of their fallen state. Perhaps it was because of its very destructiveness that it failed to affect the lives of the people in the way that the magic touch of England is now doing. In the thousand years of gloom of Moslem domination of the country, there is only one single ray of brilliant light—that of the reign of Akbar, all too soon engulfed in the terrible fog of Aurangzeb's bigotry and intolerance.

The English democratic ideas of the supreme importance of the people are taking hold of the country, and everywhere we see numberless Societies and Samajas and Anjumans, Congresses and Conferences and Leagues, at work, all trying, according to their lights, to remedy the many evils that hold our fair country in their cold and deathly grip, and to raise the

status of our people, so that they may again take their place in the van of civilisation instead of lagging woefully behind.

But with such a large number of associations. there is necessarily a good deal of dispersal and waste of energy which might very well be saved and concentrated, making success in the work of uplifting quicker if not surer.

It would probably be better if the number of these bodies were fewer and really representative of that which is the best and most far-seeing in the country; for the remedies proposed by these numberless bodies are often diametrically opposed when not wholly reactionary and tending to lower still more our unhappy condition.

In another view, these numerous movements are not an unmixed evil. Those higher ideals consonant with the spirit of the age, which their well-wishers are trying to hold up to our countrymen, can only be established after a fierce struggle with all that is effete and reactionary, or even modern but reactionary, and it is but natural that the spirit of the struggle against degeneracy should at first manifest itself in a more or less scattered form in the different departments of the national life. But to make this struggle successful, to rouse the people at large out of their apathy, and force them to think and decide, it is necessary that the scattered forces should now be organised for battle. Only after the conflict has been waged to its bitter end, and all

that is evil and deadly has been killed out, can the fittest emerge from the fierce ordeal. Then only will the numbers of these numerous and contradictory societies diminish, and the few that are really helpful will survive to carry on the work of progress and civilisation.

This struggle will be more deadly than that of the Mahabharata, when the whole fabric of the old Aryan civilisation was utterly destroyed. It is a struggle in which individual stands against individual, individual against society, ethnic group against ethnic group and caste against caste; and not till they have all been hammered into powder, like the ore dug out of the bowels of the earth, and passed through the fiery furnace, so that all the dross of unaccommodative individuality shall be burnt out, can this congeries of warring units be welded into one compact and homogeneous nation and become the shining gold desired of every one. People who lightly think national regeneration to be a milk-and-water process, and to be easily achieved by making a few speeches, are sadly mistaken. It is a process in which success is gained only after terrible upheaval, fraught with incalculable pain and suffering, which sternly and pitilessly leaves surviving only what is true and strong and of permanent value.

At present, when conditions are very different in the different parts of our huge country, local applications of special remedies are necessary. We have to remember, however, that while the local remedies,

administered by diverse hands, may be necessary, they should all be guided by one central thought—*viz., the lasting benefit of the country as a whole.* Unfortunately this has not, so far, been always kept clearly in sight by the would-be healers of our many ills.

They have generally failed to make an all-embracing enquiry, and have no clear and co-ordinate idea of the nature and the root-causes of the disease they are all trying to overcome. This failure to recognise the thread of the underlying principle on which our national existence is strung, and of the forces which mainly have weakened, or broken, or are breaking it, has naturally often resulted in the application of remedies which were neither wise nor helpful, which were indeed, sometimes positively harmful. The attempts made, so far, to touch the Nation's imagination, and thus rouse it to shake off the bonds that are keeping it tied to the earth instead of soaring high according to its divine birthright, have been mostly failures.

The different periods of our long existence look like the scattered beads of a broken rosary, unconnected with each other. Only when the proper thread is supplied by the perception of the underlying unity of the whole, will become clear the purpose, the goal, towards which we ought to be speeding. Only when this essential idea of our distinctive being as a Nation with a specific individuality of its own is understood, will the clue to the proper remedy be found, and the Nation become able to fulfil its destiny.

SECTION 2.

THE KEYNOTE OF HINDU NATIONALITY AND THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF REFORM

Our great ancestors have given us the keynote of our Nationality. It is the realising for ourselves, and the diffusion of the knowledge in the world, of the fact of the spiritual oneness of all man-kind, nay, of all that lives. The Avalokiteshvaras of the Buddhist faith, are a shining example of it, refusing Nirvana for themselves till all have passed into bliss. The different periods of our national existence are but the embodiments of the various attempts made to show forth this ideal in our daily life, and convert it from an abstract philosophical conception into a rule of living practice. But by the time this splendid ideal began to penetrate the national consciousness, India had become through and through sacerdotal and feudal in its organisation, and the idea was cramped and distorted in the attempt to make it shine through such unpromising material.

The various Avataras, the Rishis, the great poets, and the various social and religious regenerators—all have tried according to their lights to break down this wall of narrow and selfish spirit of feudalistic and ecclesiastic exclusiveness, which was nullifying the great conception of the Unity of Life.

The causes that prevent this ideal from being realised in the life of the country now are the existence

in our midst of many institutions, beliefs and customs which keep Indian apart from Indian—be he Hindu, Mussalman, Jain, Sikh, Christian, Parsi or Animist. These beliefs and customs are relics of ages when each unit that makes up the present Nation had to fight for its existence. Afterwards, having secured its existence, each such unit has continued to fight for its own supremacy, forgetful that it was only a means and not an end.

The fundamental principle of reform therefore ought to be the recognition of the fact that while different religions, different rituals, different dogmas, and different laws and customs, will always exist, yet there is always the possibility, nay the necessity, of so working as to get rid of the separative elements from all these. We must minimise differences and abolish intolerance, and thus evolve a society in which, while there is plenty of elbow-room for personal aspirations, even for idiosyncracies, homogeneity will prevail, and one common aim will dominate public life and national aspirations.

The touchstone is the unificatory aspiration as working out in actual life: all that makes for it is the highest religion and all that works against it is of the Devil.

The dominant note of our public life should be that India is one country; that the Indian people are one Nation and have a definite place in the world's future civilisation—that of being an example of the realisation of the brotherhood of humanity

in spite of the differences of caste, colour, creed, or race. Hindu society, notwithstanding its glaring defects and often ludicrous inconsistencies, has been attempting all these many thousands of years to embody as its fundamental principle wide tolerance in matters of creed, believing that all paths ultimately lead to the same goal, and also to some extent in matters of every day social life, while insisting on a fairly well-developed standard of conduct and a feeling of spiritual unity.

If we can only remove the many separative elements that yet persist or have been newly engrafted, the old ideal will live again as an accomplished fact in our daily life. To do this we must first learn to recognise frankly and manfully the factors that keep Indian apart from Indian, suspicious when not positively inimical, and not try to bolster up such factors with fanciful and casuistical explanations, based on ill-learnt and misapplied science and philosophy. This, unfortunately for the cause truth of and humanity, is being very extensively done at present. The greatest of these separative elements is the subordination of the social life of India to the authority of ecclesiastical and social organisations posing in the name of religion ill-understood and misapplied.

SECTION 3.

IS SANATANA DHARMA UNIFORM FOR ALL INDIA ?

There is a vague belief in the minds of many, that the rules governing the details of our daily life—called Sanatana Dharma—were propounded by the omniscient Rishis, *trikalajnya*, "knowing all that was, is, and will be, in all the three divisions of time," and are hence eternal, unchanging and uniform for all Hindus. This belief is not true. These details were never uniform ; for different Rishis prescribed different practices to people in their own several parts of the country. They have undergone many changes. What was proper and meritorious at one period became improper and even sinful at others, and *vice versa*. Also even if the 'laws' were eternal, who can confidently allege that their human interpreters, the successive generations of Rishis, have not erred and tried to correct one another ? In fact even a superficial study of the Smritis will convince anyone that there have been constant changes and adaptations, and our Dharma has never been '*Sanatana* in the sense of being unchanging.

This point is clearly and unequivocally brought out in the Mahabharata, when Yudhishthira, in answer to the Yaksha, who had temporarily thrown his four brothers into a death-like trance, is made to say by Vyasa: "The teachings of the Vedas are contradictory, as are those of the Smritis ; there is not one Rishi

whose words are finally and conclusively *pramana* (binding); the essence of Dharma (duty) is hidden in the cave (of the human heart), and (when all other guides fail) the path by which the majority decides to walk is the right path."

ANOMALIES AND CONTRADICTIONS

We have, moreover, a most convenient way of accepting only those passages from our sacred writings which tickle our prejudices, and coolly ignoring such as we cannot or do not care to follow. For instance: no Aryan is ever to cross the Vindhya Ranges: doing it even unknowingly brings down on him a heavy penance; much less can he make the Deccan his permanent home. But what do we find to-day? Tamil and Maharashtra Brahmans, and especially the notoriously uneducated Nambudries of Malabar, regard themselves as the cream of Brahmandom and refuse recognition of kinship to the fish-and-flesh-eating Brahmans of the other (the Northern) side of the Vindhya Mountains. They conveniently forget that it is they themselves who by transgressing the law of habitat have lost their Brahmanhood. Again, Brahmans are not to enter into professions and trades, much less to be sellers of salt and of liquors; but are they not to-day freely carrying on these trades, flooding the various professions, entering into all sorts of services, and competing with the lowest on terms of equality? Where have gone the Brahmacharya of the olden days, and the knowledge of the Vedas, and the practice of daily ritual, without which a Brahman was

degraded into a Pariah, a Chandala? Are such degradations duly carried out to-day? What did we do when the custom of Sati was put down, and the 'sacred' person of the Brahman convicted of robbing and murder was seen swinging in the winds on the gallows? It may do good to those modern hysterical Hindus, who go into ecstacies over the beauties of the custom of Sati, to know that among the Gold Coast Negroes the glory of conjugal fidelity is not the preserve of the women only; the widower—at least in the case of the husband of the King's sister—immolates himself on the funeral pyre of his beloved. It is much to be regretted that there were no women legislators to enforce such a reasonable and just rule in India also! Does not Manu say that no Aryan is to live under a Monarch who is a Mlechcha? Is he obeyed? Endless examples of such deviations from old rules are to be met with in our daily life, and it was with a view to meeting the exigencies of changing times that the old writers started the system of what is known as 'Apad Dharma' which simply means that they could not help recognising the necessity for a modification of the 'eternal' rules brought about under the stress of changed circumstances.

The result of all this is that what is 'sacred Sanatana Dharma' in one part of India is either unknown, or even regarded as sin in another part, while the pretence of every custom being ancient is kept up. For instance, the Tali (a piece of gold with a thread running through it for tying it round the neck of

the bride) as a symbol of marriage, is indispensable and most sacred in Southern India; but it is wholly unknown in Northern India, where its place is taken by Sindur (a red powder put where the hair is parted). Flesh and fish, which latter is especially prohibited by Manu, while quite commonly eaten by the Northern Brahmans, are looked on with loathing by the Southern Brahmans. Their use is thought quite sinful, and the eaters thereof are regarded with contempt. In Southern India not only does the custom prevail of marrying one's maternal uncle's daughter, but of marrying one's own sister's daughter, even among the Brahmans. Among the Telugu Komtis (Vaishyas) such marriages are incumbent. They also freely take place in the families of the Maharaja of Mysore. Yet such marriages arouse feelings of the deepest abhorrence among Hindus of all castes in Northern India.

How dangerous it is for a theologian to assign reasons for his commands is very well exemplified by such instances. They are generally careful not to give reasons for their rules, but here Manu was unfortunately betrayed into assigning a reason, to the undoing of his own injunction. His prohibition of fish is based on the undeniable fact that fishes are omnivorous feeders; filth, carrion, human corpses, nothing is rejected by them, and "therefore he who eats fish eats everything!" Well, to say nothing of the lower castes, who all over the country are fish-eaters, we shall take only the case of those Brahmans of Upper India, who

regard themselves as the cream of their kind—the Kulins of Bengal, the Shrotriyas of Behar, the Kanyakubjas of the United Provinces,—who all eat fish freely. What should be the social grade of these in view of Manu's prohibition? How too is the filth-eating cow to be regarded? This nasty habit of hers has not entailed any diminution of her sacredness. We might learn thorough-going logic from the Central India aborigines who regard milk as an excrement and never use it!

One of the names for a guest in ancient India was Goghna, "cow-killer". The offering of 'madhuparka' beef-soup, was imperative, and for this the sacrifice of the 'fatted calf' was essential. Who would dare even to dream of performing such a dreadful sacrilege in modern India? The Pratyabdic or yearly Shraddha so universal in India, and considered as the last bulwark of ceremonial Hinduism, is not even mentioned in the Sutras, except in one, which is most probably a late one. Customs have changed so much that the word "Brahmana," which was once applied only to a master of mantras and hence of Devas, and later on to a knower of Brahma, is now used for men doing all sorts of menial work, even to that of being the carriers of the dead in our jails and hospitals. This is the inevitable result of making merely birth the standard, for as soon as a possession becomes hereditary it begins to degenerate. In the very nature of things it is impossible for over a hundred lakhs to be born philosophers and teachers, and for over fifty lakhs to be saints and

sadhus. If it were so the millennium would be very near indeed, or would have been achieved long ago.

POSSIBLE EARLY FOREIGN INFLUENCES ON CUSTOMS

It would throw considerable light on the evolution of Hinduism from its pre-Vedic conditions down to our own times if we could find out the beginnings of even a few well-marked changes. To take for example this very question of cow-killing. What were the causes whose operations transformed the cow-eating Hindu into a cow-worshipping one, it is impossible even to guess at; unless we are prepared to assert a direct contact with the Egyptians and the borrowing thence of their cow-goddess Hathor to whom they built temples in which they installed and worshipped images of cows. The Egyptian worshipped a live bull also, under the name of Apis, who was annually given a new cow-wife, besides many cow-concubines. The nearest thing to this that the Hindu has is the 'setting free' of one bull with four cows—the Vrishotsarga of the funeral ceremonies. The Hindu, if he borrowed this cult from Egypt, has borrowed it in a very diluted form. He has failed to raise stately fanes where images of the 'cow mother' are worshipped with pompous ritual. The Yajurveda, however, prescribes the death penalty for all cow-killers, a penalty still enforced in Nepal, and till very lately in Kashmir, where under English pressure it has now been changed into 10 years' imprisonment.

The case for augury, divination, omenology, astrology and such other popular superstitions seems to be

slightly different. The Assyrians and Chaldeans were next door neighbours and one is tempted to believe that all these, if not borrowed wholesale, were at least developed highly under their influences. In this connection it might be remembered that a large part of of Northern India before the days of Alexander's invasion was under Persian influence for nearly 500 years.

If only the bulk of the people—or for the matter of that even the majority of their social and religious leaders—could be made once to realise this, that most of the practices that they continue to regard as religious are only the result of economic causes and of expediency, the progress of the people towards a compact and homogeneous nationhood would be swift. Societies and combinations that refuse to concede social and theological liberty to the individual are scarcely the fittest bodies to be trusted to deal fairly with the political liberties of others. The inquisitor in the very nature of things can never be a constitutional ruler. He can only be a political tyrant.

SECTION 4.

The Absolute Necessity of Liberating Social Life from Canonical Authority

If the people are to grow, they must not be treated as permanent children, who at every moment of their lives are to be ordered to do this and not to do that, by an ill-instructed and fussy mother. Responsibility should be thrown on them, so that even when they are inert, lazy, unwilling, they may be forced to rely on themselves; it should not be, as is the case today in custom-ridden India, that even those people who are willing to shoulder their burdens are not allowed to do so. Those who insist on unyielding conformity to prescription can hardly be said not to be in a state of demoralization. The only way to deal with this evil then is by the dissociation of the life of the world from the leading-strings of canonical authority, masquerading as, and usurping the place of, the custodian of real religion.

The barriers to Indian unity and progress are, not only the many and conflicting sub-sects of the Hindu religion, flaunting their rigid demarcations in each other's wrathful eyes by the varieties of armorial bearings stamped on the bodies and foreheads of their followers, but, also the great and different religious systems themselves within the territorial limits of India under one political, and professedly secular, Government. These religions, by their insistence on sub-

ordinating the social life of the people to the dictates of corrupt and selfish ecclesiastical authorities, instead of leaving religion to be a matter of the personal life, have succeeded all too well in paralysing the intellectual and moral powers—nay, even the religious thought itself—of the people of the country, and in inviting and maintaining the foreign domination as a consequence.

SECTION 5.

Religious Conflict—the Basis of Foreign Domination; Official Confessions

Lord George Hamilton, when Secretary of State for India, in his speech (delivered on October 5, 1904, and reported in the STATESMAN, October 23) when opening the Indian Empire Exhibition, at the Whitechapel Gallery, said :—'In one town in India would be met more varieties of race and religion than could be seen in the whole of Europe. This diversity of race and creed was the origin of our Empire, and the secret of its strength.'

No truer remarks were ever made about the condition of things here, and this candid disclosure of the very root of the mischief by another, a stranger, should show us where to apply the necessary remedies, if we have not eyes to see for ourselves. Sir John Seeley in his 'Expansion of England' has also made similar statements. A great Anglo-Indian administrator—the late Sir John Strachey—has also some acute remarks on this point in his 'India.' He says :—'The existence side by side of these hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India.' While grudgingly making this admission, he repudiates indignantly the suggestion that this communal feeling is exploited in the interests of the Ruling Power. He says, 'Nothing could be more opposed to the policy

and universal practice of our Government in India than the old maxim of divide and rule.' (2nd Ed. p. 241). On reading this after such an emphatic declaration as the one quoted before, one is apt to exclaim 'methinks, the lady doth protest too much.'

Knowing what human nature has been and is throughout the world and seeing the overpowering effects of the instinct of self-preservation and self-seeking even among the highly developed, one cannot help feeling that this irresistible force is not altogether absent from the heart of the close bureaucracy that rules India. The very loudness of the protest produces doubts. Has the Civil Service so far given any active help in the suppression and dissipation of these inimical, racial and religious prejudices? To strengthen and confirm these doubts comes the book of Captain Lyon on the North-West Frontier, published under official auspices, too, in which he frankly declares that these religious and racial hatreds are exploited by the British Government. Two more instances given in the MODERN REVIEW for February 1926 p. 226, may be quoted here, which fully bear out the Indian belief that "divide and rule" is the policy of the Government of India. "Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay in a Minute dated 14th May 1859 wrote, *Divide et impera* was the old Roman motto and it should be ours.' Lieutenant-Colonel John Coke, in papers submitted to Parliament wrote 'Our endeavour should be to uphold in full force the (for us fortunate) separation which exists between the different religions and races, not to

endeavour to amalgamate them. '*Divide et impera* should be the principle of Indian Government.' Then there is the notorious speech of Sir Bampfylde Fuller, when Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam, in which occurs the historical phrase about Moslems being his 'favourite wife!' On the top of these came the Council Regulations of Lord Minto introducing into the administration of India, the *odium theologicum* in its most naked form, and heavily handicapping the Hindu merely because of his Hinduism. Finally, there is Lord Curzon's confession in his memorable speech in the House of Lords, on the annulment of his Bengal Partition, that one of his reasons for the Partition was that he wished to favour the Moslems, for which candid statement of his, he was roundly taken to task by Lord MacDonnell. The Hindus would not have been so mercilessly murdered or forced to embrace Islam at the point of the dagger, their women ravished, and their property looted, in the Moplah outbreak in Malabar, and in Multan, Kohat, Saharanpur and many other places, in the communal riots which began in 1921-22 as a counterblast to the efforts of the Non-Co-operation movement to bring about Religious Unity in India—if the Muslims had had the feeling that the Government of the time would hold the balance evenly and deal justly by wrong-doers.

Where is the wonder then if the declarations about the good intentions of the British Government are doubted by the common people, who do not read

Government Gazettes and whose sole method of judging of the intention of any authority is, to see how professions are translated into action ? But by all this it is not meant to be suggested that it would be wise to try the methods of the pre-Soviet Russian bureaucracy and force the different religions under a dominant Government into one iron mould. What is suggested and urged is, that every opportunity should be utilised to its fullest by the administration for creating feelings of sympathy, homogeneity and cohesion between the different religious communities. At the same time we have to remember that British Administrators would be more than human if they did not exploit our weakness for the benefit of their own country ; and that the remedy lies with ourselves, not with others, ultimately.

SECTION 6.

THE HINDU-MOSLEM QUESTION AND THE WAY OF RECONCILIATION

It may be profitable to dwell briefly on the Hindu-Moslem relations in this country. There can be no disguising the fact that many things have happened to strain them badly. But it is not impossible to so arrange matters as to bring about perfect harmony between these great religious systems in India. So far as I have been able to gather, Hindu opinion on the point is unanimous that if our Moslem co-citizens would abstain from but just two practices of theirs, enmity and sullen resentment would at once give way to deep gratitude and firm fraternity. These are the public sacrifice of cows and the obstruction of Hindu processions in the Moharram days, or over roads on which mosques might be situated. It needs no pointing out that by refraining from these two actions the Mussalman will not be guilty of any irreligious action.

COW SACRIFICE

The Shias never sacrifice cows, nor are cows sacrificed by Sunnis anywhere else except in India. Camels and sheep only are prescribed by their holy books. His Majesty the late Amir of Afghanistan showed a true and just sense of his kingly duties, when he was a guest of the Government of India, by laying it down as a condition of his taking part in the

Moslem ceremonials in the Jama Musjid of Delhi, that no cows were to be sacrificed; and none were. To strengthen this contention for peace and amity between these two religions, a few wise sentences may be quoted from the statesmanlike article of H. H. the Aga Khan in the COMRADE, reproduced in the LEADER of February 14, 1912. The Aga Khan writes:—'Anything that permanently alienates and offends the sentiments or interests of millions of Indians, be they Moslem or Hindu, is undoubtedly in itself an undesirable thing and should not only be avoided by the Government but also opposed by all communities of India.' The two points mentioned above are just those points by conceding which Moslems will lose nothing whatsoever and gain the permanent goodwill of their Hindu brethren. This will be a distinct gain to India, by which both will benefit. The occasion for the Aga Khan's article was a political one due to the Moslem grievance over the modification of the Partition of Bengal. But its advice applies with even greater force to the non-political but social and religious bad feeling between the two communities. In this case it is not a question of the 'satisfaction of the sentimental grievances of the great Bengali Nation' alone but of the whole of the Hindu community and therefore, far more important. Political bickerings and the scramble for the loaves and fishes of Government patronage and service, touch only the surface of the life of these communities, while this question goes deep down to the very bottom of the Hindus' life. To attain such a magnificent result the

very small amount of accommodativeness needed should not be beyond the capacity of wise statesmanship.

CONSEQUENCES OF GIVING UNDUE IMPORTANCE TO MINOR FORMS AND CEREMONIALISM

What has been at the root of our deterioration is the manner in which we have laid stress upon the non-essentials of our religion, and more than ignored its essentials. This has led to the inevitable result that points of difference between religion and religion have multiplied and those of unity have gradually weakened. It is because of this stressing of every deviation from the normal and the raising of each minor form to the dignity of 'the only true religion,' that we have not been able to produce the cohesion and partiotism of the Japanese, which makes them welcome death for their country as the highest honour for which they can compete. It is because of the utter stagnation of public and corporate life, resulting from the diversion of all available energy to the war between religious authorities, that we have been contentedly swallowing the contempt and ill-treatment of the world, century after century, without making any serious attempt to set our house in order. We Hindus feel supremely happy and entirely contented when the absurd gesticulations, attitudes and postures of so-called religious observances have been gone through in the soulless manner of mere formality and routine, and when the 'defiling' touch of men of other castes and other religions, nay even of our own kith and kin, has been avoided. So

many of us smile in superior fashion at our critics and talk of their ignorance of our 'splendid past' and of the beautiful truths about Devas, and demons, and creation and what not, propounded in our religious books! Even the latest discoveries of science, and all that are yet to come, are hidden in our Vedas and Puranas from the vulgar gaze, under allegories, forsooth! How many of us can show any real knowledge of, or can honestly work out, the true and correct interpretation of any of these books? If these sapient persons are so sure about the treasures hidden in the Vedas, why do they not bring some of them out themselves in advance of the European scientists?—why do they always wait for the Europeans to announce their discoveries, before making their explanations that they are pre-existent in the Vedas!

Ceremonialism is the one panacea for all evils to our sluggish hearts. How this has permeated through and through our daily life, almost to the complete exclusion of a truly religious spirit and genuine reverence, is easily shown by citing a single instance, *viz.*, the daily prayers of the Hindu, which for some time now have consisted mostly in various twistings and torturings of the fingers and of the limbs. Contrast this with the Greek attitude. Free child of Nature that he was, he alone among all the Nations of the world succeeded in harmonising his attitude of reverence and worship with that of self-respecting independence. The Greek never grovelled in the dust in abject self-abasement before God or King. He neither bent his

knee nor lay prone on the earth, full of the slave's mortal terror before his lord and master. He paid his homage and did his worship standing face to face with the powers, whether seen or unseen. No trace of fear sullied his pure adoration of the Divine. The very ancient Hindu attitude was similar; it was, alas! all too quickly submerged under the flood of superstition. The Vedic Hindu proudly asserted his equality with Divinity—(योऽसावादित्ये पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि). When such was his faith there could be no room for other feelings than those of intense love and yearning for and devotion to THAT which was the same as he in his real self.

SECTION 7.

NEED TO REALISE AND DEVELOP TRUE PATRIOTISM *i.e.*, BROTHERLINESS OF SPIRIT

This persistent and deliberate perversity in shutting our eyes to the teachings of history, and to what true patriotism and real duty are, is heart-breaking to contemplate. It is high time that we set about seriously developing a genuine and wide-reaching brotherliness of spirit, rigorously putting aside the paltry bickerings over the loaves and fishes of office, and social and caste barriers. It is high time that we realised that religion—when it does not make a man honest in his dealings with men of other religions, when it does not produce feelings of brotherly love to persons of other religions, when it murders historical truth in the interests of ecclesiastical selfishness, when it narrows itself down to questions of creed and dogma, of caste and colour and sex, when it becomes a divisive instead of a cohesive force—is not religion.

WANT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION IN INDIA, DUE TO ECCLESIASTICAL AND POLITICAL AUTHORITIES

Every nation that is fit to take its proper place in the comity of Nations has unceasingly to stand the test of intellectual, social, religious, political and economical adjustment and progress. India is frightfully ignorant and ill-educated. Its social inequalities are painful to contemplate. Latter-day Hinduism has

come to be heavily encrusted with a mass of grovelling superstitions in which even their professors do not really believe. Economically and politically, India is bond-slave to another country. Ecclesiastical and political authorities, though from widely divergent motives, alike discourage truly national education—the former discouraging even ordinary education.

The Work of British Courts of Justice in Preventing the Growth of an Indian Nation

Even the British Courts of Justice have, by administering obsolete, contradictory and illogical personal laws, unconsciously, but effectually, had their share in the prevention of the growth of an enlightened and homogeneous Indian Nation.

* Such a very high authority as Sir Henry S. Maine, has said that Hindu law as administered by the Anglo-Indian Law Courts has assumed a stiffness, rigidity and inflexibility, which formed no feature of the system before British rule. Usage and custom have been generally discarded in favour of Smritis and worse still, Nibandhas, digests. It was not borne in mind that the Sanskrit—I purposely avoid using the word Hindu in this connection—legal literature was written by Brahmans and for Brahmans, primarily, and that there never was any pervasive political authority enforcing its rules in the way modern British Courts do. The doctrinaire character of all this

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* See my Introduction to Vyavahara-Balambhatti (Chaukhambha Sanskrit Series, Benares) for a fuller treatment of the above subject.

enormous mass of 'legal literature too has not been realised by the Law Courts and great hardship is caused by sometimes relying on usage and at other times on the written law according to the idiosyncracy of the presiding Judge and his ways of interpreting the doctrine of 'public policy'. Conflicting High Court decisions have produced confusion all over the country by which pleaders glean a rich harvest. But for this ignorant interference of the Courts, the rapidly changing society would have gone on adapting its usages to the changing circumstances instead of being confined in an unyielding iron jacket, so that, whether we wish or not, we are forced to conform to what is believed by the Judges to be our personal law. Personal indeed, when we are powerless to recede from or make an advance on it! There is imperative necessity for legislative interference here.

Need of Liberal Permissive Laws and of Freedom of Conscience

We stand badly in need of liberal permissive laws. We have a few examples of these—all too few—on the statute book. But the British Government seems to have become strangely squeamish these days and studiously chokes off all efforts meant to allow greater personal liberty. It conveniently forgets that the primary aim of all legislation should be the removal of all those restrictions on the free action of an individual, which are not necessary for securing the like freedom for others, and demands through its official mouthpieces conditions for the passage of Bills which

are impossible of fulfilment anywhere in the world. To give an instance: the then Home Member, Sir John Jenkins demanded unanimous backing for Mr. Basu's Marriage Reform Bill. The Government knows full well how largely in India are misused the rights of association, combination, union, as organised in the numerous socio-religious groups, known as castes and sub-castes, sects and sub-sects. All these semi-ecclesiastical institutions resort freely to boycotting, excommunication, picketing, and 'moral pressure' often more violent than physical. Any law or institution that allows of such trenching on individual liberty, by making a person's civil rights dependent upon his religious persuasion, is a monstrous perversion of justice and a tyrannical interference with the person's freedom of conscience.

Complete freedom of conscience and separation of social actions from the tyranny of ecclesiastical authority and the petrifying bondage of a dead past is the only possible effective and practical means for unifying and uplifting the widely divergent religious and ethnical groups, going under the names of castes, sub-castes, mixed castes, or no castes, within the territorial limits of modern India.

It is not to be expected that this principle, of social life being independent of ecclesiastical authority, will easily and quickly become popular enough to be realised in every-day life. Rather, the first instinct of the people concerned will be to dismiss it as a wild chimera at once. It will become popular, someday,

no doubt, but only after a hard struggle. Even in the France of to-day—ever fertile in new ideas and leader in characteristic modern material civilisation—this same idea became dominant only after bitter struggles. Can we of India hope then to waken after a sleep of centuries without a struggle? As to the idea being new, or chimerical it is neither so wild nor so new as it may seem to some. Those who have at all studied the sociology of the country will have noticed that the germs of it have always been in existence amongst us and we have got only to develop them. One instance may be given. Everyone knows that the Jainas, while calling themselves Hindus and practising the caste system, do not believe in the Vedas and their ceremonials, in fact, oppose them; nor do they follow our sacramental rituals, nor observe the rules about 'impurity,' nor perform Shraddhas; yet in spite of all these radical differences the orthodoxy of Hinduism has not been shocked, and interdining and intermarriages take place between them and Vaishnava Hindus of the same caste, even in that hub of the Hindu Universe, the sacred Kashi! Similarly in the Punjab, Sikh and non-Sikh Hindus inter-marry and keep up all social relations.

To come to modern innovations, the very primitive surgery and medicine of the Hindus have been almost entirely superseded by that imported from the West. This was as much 'revealed' and 'sacred' as any other portion of Hinduism. But the superiority of Western Science specially in surgery, was so patent that

even the proverbial villager could not fail to see it, and, in spite of his obstinately superstitious orthodoxy adopt it. This idea of social independence is bound to spread in the course of time, as people come more and more to realise, under the uniform pressure of a secular Central Government and the spread of education, that it is better to guide their daily lives by reason and the exigencies of changing times than by obedience to imaginary Shastric authorities. How many Hindus to-day obey the astrological command to expose to death the baby born in 'Moola'? In spite of all the *Muhurta-chintamanis*, he has allowed his natural affection to over-ride the horrid 'canonical law.'

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SECTION 8.

THE ADOPTION OF THIS PRINCIPLE WILL SOLVE THE SEA-VOYAGE AND SHUDDHI PROBLEMS

The immediate result of the adoption of this principle in our life will be the easy solution of some of the most pressing problems that are producing so much strife and heart-burning at present, and the want of the proper solution of which is hampering the progress of Hindu Society enormously. Thus, the sea-voyage problem would similarly vanish; as has vanished the old problem of the prohibition of going even to certain parts of India. In one of the old books a man is asked if he has lived in the Kalinga (Telugu) country; he at once answers back that he has never even visited that sinful tract! Such was the horror excited in those days by travel even within the limits of India. Now, in defiance of the rules of Manu laying down the boundaries within which only an Aryan is to live, we find them not only in every nook and corner of the vast peninsula, but all over Asia and its islands, in Africa, and even in far off America, and the islands of Mauritius and Fiji. We find Brahmans settled in Siam and officiating as priests at the Coronation of the King. If the really old Hindus had been insular bigots as they are to-day, how could this religion have penetrated over two thousand years ago, prior to the age of Patanjali, and of the modern non-Vedic Hinduism, to the distant islands of Java and Batavia, whose memory

even has perished from Hindu India, and have left behind there, ruins of magnificent temples to Indra and other Vedic Gods indicative of the ancient condition of things? Orthodoxy will have to be made to recognise that this prohibition against going out to foreign lands is productive of immense harm to the country. Whether we want to learn new methods of industrial work and organisation, or to study the arts and the sciences, or even to enter the higher ranks of the public services in our own country, we all know that it is not possible to do so if we confine ourselves within the boundaries of India. To foreign and distant countries we must go if we want any of these things. And yet some of our venturesome people who had the temerity to go out have had to pay the penalty for their action by being forced to subject themselves on their return to many degrading penances on ecclesiastical grounds, when they have by good luck escaped complete ostracism. Why should not every person be free to come and go anywhere as he lists? We see that no penalty is exacted from the Brahmans in the British military service who have to go out to any part of the world they may be sent to, and who do go out, and whose fathers and brothers are family priests to members of other castes; where they become obstructionists when any of these want to travel out.

The question of 'Shuddhi', or the re-admission into the fold, of converts from Hinduism, will also vanish. Everyone who chose to come back would be

welcome and not be thrust away with words of contumely. If the social life is released from the tyranny of ignorant, crafty and obstructive priests and caste-heads, who have misappropriated to themselves the right of excommunication in the name of religion, people would not be forced to remain out of Hindu society, or to join other religious folds for securing liberty of action in matters pertaining to the personal life, as they are to-day.

Hinduism as a World-Embracing Religion

It would become possible for Hinduism to go out into the world as a great preaching religion, teaching the true meaning and purpose of the universe, and setting forth the plan of a scientific and philosophical life in accordance with that meaning. For then it would be possible for any one who has full sympathy with the religious teachings of Hinduism and believes in them to come under its influence without doing violence to his social life. The late Swami Vivekananda and his disciples have shown that such an ideal is not impossible of realisation. The day this comes about Hinduism will become a world-embracing religion, like Christianity and Islam, and look far beyond its present limited horizon for sympathy and for help, as those great religious organisations do. The so-called 'schisms' from the parent religion—that of the Buddhists, of the Sikhs, of the followers of Kabir, even of Chaitanya, for he is regarded as quite orthodox—made no fuss over 'conversion', for out of these conversions they have

grown, two of Chaitanya's most famous disciples having been Mussalmans.

Similar has been the action of some others of the Vaishnava cults, for instance those of Vallabhacharya and of Ramanuja in earlier days. That Vaishnavism has always been a liberal and absorbing cult, is proved by epigraphical discoveries which show that in the centuries preceding Christ such was the case. For instance a stone record has been unearthed showing that Heliodorus, a Greek, was a Parama-bhagavata—a great devotee of Vishnu! (*Vide* Sir Ramkrishna Bhandarkar's Monograph in Buhler's Encyclopædia of Indo-Aryan Research, on the Bhakti Schools). The Vedic Hindus had a special rite for group-conversion known as the 'Vratyastoma', a most convenient and helpful legal fiction which is fully dealt with in the Tandya-Brahmana of the Sama Veda.

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CHAPTER II.

MARRIAGE LAWS AND CUSTOMS.

SECTION I.

RACE-PURITY AND THE FREEING OF THE MARRIAGE LAWS FROM CANONICAL AUTHORITY

IT may be objected that freedom from the bondage of ecclesiastical leading strings will jeopardise our race-purity, on which we so much pride ourselves, rather foolishly, as will be presently shown, by making it possible to legalise the many unions which, while common in the country, are supposed to be prohibited by the Shastras and are not recognised by law either. Well yes, it is certain to legalise many an illegal union, and much to the benefit —material and moral—of all concerned. As to the fear for the purity of the race, it is too late in the day to raise up that bogey. We should remember that only now under the pressure of the British Government the murder of girl-babies by the Kshatriyas as a class has been given up, and even that not completely yet, by any means. For centuries they have been forced to go out of their castes to provide wives for their male children. 'Father-in-law' and 'brother-in-law' had become, to the perverse mind, unpardonable terms of abuse, and the vain soul of the Kshatriya could not bear it. (The perversity was probably brought about by the frequency of 'marriage by capture', in the

medieval Hindu times, as well as in the succeeding times of Hindu-Muslim struggle). He killed his daughters and with them his 'race-purity'. Every one knows that there are numerous illegal unions among men and women of different religions and different castes, and even different ethnic groups. This has been going on for all time, as Yudhishthira pointed out in his answer to Nahusha, that intermixture was so universal that to lay stress on birth as the basis of caste was absurd (Vanaparva-sl. 180). Surely, these numberless unions are not all barren; what becomes of the children born of such unions? Do they not merge into some caste or group somewhere, and thus help on the much dreaded race-mixture? We ought to remember that the license allowed to both sexes in those ancient days was very great. Even to-day the mantra

यन्मे माता प्रलुलुभे विचरन्त्यननुव्रता तन्मे रेतः पिता वृङ्क्तामाभुरन्योऽभि पद्यताम्

continues to be repeated at Shraddha offerings by Brahmans, that 'this pinda may reach him who is my recognised father'—and not the real father. Manu(9.20) cites the fact of this mantra being found in the Veda in proof of his contention that women are by their very nature impure! The original is too frank and plain to bear a literal translation here. The reading as found in Manu is slightly different. Medhatithi explains it by saying that the liberty taken with the text of the mantra by Manu was due to the exigencies of metre.

A few of the places where the mantra is given are:—The Ekagnikanda (Mysore). Apastamba

Mantrapatha (Oxford) 2 19.5 & 2 19.1, Apastamba Grihyasutra (Vienna) 8. 21 3. Apastamba Shrautasutra (Bib. Ind.) 1 9 9, Hiranyakeshin Grihyasutra (Vienna) 2.10.7, Sankhayana Grihyasutra (Leipzig) 3.13.5. Vishnusmriti (Bibl. Ind.) 23.12.

It would be a profound mistake to judge of those far off days from our modern standpoint. The above mantra evidently preserves traces of those very ancient days when the communal ownership of women was being given up under the pressure of changing economic and political conditions, a newer social organisation was being ushered in, and individualism was slowly but steadily pushing back communalism. Such a primitive condition of affairs need not arouse horror. Plato in his Republic has advocated it most strongly and defended it with all the power of his unmatched philosophic eloquence! The second, the individualistic stage, the evolution of sex morals, gradually developed the status of 'preserves' in which no 'poaching' was permissible. The third period of development came at a later period in the shape of the introduction of the fidelity-clause, especially on the part of the woman, in the marriage-contract. That the earlier phases of the development of this most important branch of the social polity were almost entirely forgotton or ignored by the later Hindu jurists is well exemplified by the misinterpretations of Manu's oft-quoted shloka,

न मांसभक्षणे दोषो नमद्ये नचमैथुने। प्रवृत्तिरेषा भूतानां निवृत्तिस्तु महाफला॥

"There is no sin in eating flesh, or drinking liquors, nor in coitus. Desire for these is natural; but the refraining from them is meritorious."

All the three items mentioned in the first half of the verse are to be taken together, while the later half shows that the attempt to put a curb on the free living of earlier days had begun. The History of the Evolution of Marriage is not very dissimilar to the History of the Evolution of Property; and these two when properly worked out help to throw a great deal of light on each other and make many a dark spot clear. Works like Westtmarck's *History of Human Marriage* enable us to understand, with sympathy, the condition of things prevailing in the East as well as the West in past as well as present times, some of which conditions are indicated by the Vedic verse referred to above. Sex-freedom must evidently have been very unchecked (as is indeed clearly said, in the story of Shvetaketu and Uddalaka in the Mahabharata). In those far past times, before a ritualistic legitimisation of every birth, could have been thought of and come into such wide use. Were it not for this undeniable fact of race-mixture and race-absorption, a few handfuls, comparatively speaking, of Vedic Aryans could not have swelled to over 200 millions and in a very limited time too. In spite of the decennial census, which is to some extent a check on the process, we see every-day, tribes, families, individuals being Hinduised, and all sorts and conditions of persons insisting on being classed as Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, the Pariah wriggling into Pillai, and so on. Even the much

later and often touched-up laws of Manu recognise the marriages of Shudra women to men of higher castes; while the older practice and theory made no such distinction—any caste or no-caste man marrying any caste or no-caste woman. The Vedic and Puranic literatures preserve many stories of Aryan girls being given away to Non-Aryan Chiefs; and Non-Aryan girls being married to Aryans. The same process has been going on with regard to the 70 millions of Indian Mussalmans: the vast majority of these never came from Arabia or Persia, but are the sons of converts and converted women married by the Islamic conquering hordes, and are essentially of the same Indian stock as the Hindu. The talk about a 'pure race' is a pure myth. A study of the Vedas, the Puranas and the Itihasas will show that the present day Hindus are a very much mixed race and are as little pure Aryans as the 7 crores of Mussulmans in India are pure Arabs or the English pure Saxons. It would be hard to get any ethnologist to admit the Brahmanical pretensions of their particular caste being an unmixed pure-blooded one, descended from the seven mythical Gotra-Rishis and of there being a radical and inherent ethnic difference between them and the rest of the non-Brahman Hindus; or, again, of the ethnic unity between such distinct types as the Bengali, the Kashmiri, the Maharashtra and the Tamil Brahmans. A study of 'The Jews,' in the Contemporary Science Series, would serve to open the eyes of believers in the persistence of a pure-blooded Aryan race composed of the present

three crores or so of Brahmans, Vaishyas, and Kshatriyas. Mixed marriages are in full consonance with the theory and practice of Vedic and even Puranic India and we moderns should be ashamed to depart from such useful practices.

MANU AND RACE PURITY.

Manu (4-239, 240) in one of his verses advocates अन्त्यादपि परं धर्मं स्त्रीरत्नं दुष्कुलादपि. 'The highest religion should be learned even from a Pariah Teacher, and a beautiful woman should be married even out of a low family.'

The word कुल in the original is the real crux of the situation, and attempts from the very earliest days have been made to interpret the word in a narrow philosophical spirit as meaning a 'bad family' but of the same caste or sub-caste. But such an interpretation, aiming at rigidly restricting the scope of marriage, is wholly opposed to the real spirit of the verse. This is proved by the practice of those early days, which is well-known to all students of the Vedas, the Puranas and the Itihasas. Two verses may be quoted here taken at random from the Mahabharata out of many hundreds like them.

(a) गणिकागर्भसम्भूतो वसिष्ठश्च महामुनिः
तपसा ब्राह्मणो जातः संस्कारस्तत्र कारणम् ।

(b) जातो व्यासस्तु कैवर्त्याः श्वपाक्यास्तु पराशरः
बहवोऽन्येऽपिविप्रत्वं प्राप्ता ये पूर्वमद्विजाः ॥

(a) 'The great Saint Vasishta was born of a prostitute and became a Brahman on account of *Tapas* and

Samskara. (*b*) Vyasa was born of a fisher-woman and Parashara of a Shwapaki (*i. e*, a chandala, a cooker and eater of dog's flesh'). And many others who were non-Dvija *i. e.* below the 3 higher castes, have also attained Brahmanhood!' Of course there are also verses in Manu, which limit this wide provision by disallowing marriages with girls of a lower caste than the Shudra, while there are still other verses, which would restrict the connubial relations with members of one's special caste alone. All this only helps to support the oft-repeated contention that Manu is not a coherent whole, but a composite of all kinds of high ideals and noble teachings in juxtaposition with customs and practices suited down to savage and barbarous minds. Current orthodoxy unfortunately emphasises the lower, having lost the power to appreciate and promote the higher. To understand Manu properly we have to think of the uneven quality of the various laws of any modern 'civilised' native, and also to bear in mind that he expressly says that he is describing in the work the *Dharma*—*s* of many classes of people, including the wicked ones.

देशधर्मानजातिधर्मान् कुलधर्मांश्च शाश्वतान् ।
पाषंडगणधर्मांश्च शास्त्रेस्मिन्नुक्तवान मनु : (I 118)

A great patriarch, statesman and legislator has to make provision for the weakest and most sickly members of the vast family, and not only for the saints and heroes. But the misfortune of the family is that Manu and the Rishis, the large-hearted and large-minded

elders have disappeared, that men of their type no longer guide the people, and the comprehensive laws written and left by them have fallen into the hands of narrow-minded, and selfish and unworthy men, who fasten only upon the lowest practices, with canting hypocricy.

The commentators on Manu, who might have been fairly good servants if kept to their proper position of subordination, have turned out very bad masters after being elevated to that dignity.

Beneficial Effect of Mixed Marriages

Do we not see to-day that a botanist or a breeder, who wishes to produce an improved flower or fruit or stock, must stop in-and-in breeding, and practise cross-fertilisation? It is a law of nature that progress can only be through heterogeneity from homogeneity, and not by rigid uniformity and sameness, which result only in deterioration, disease and death. We see that the quickest-witted races of the world, for instance the Americans, are the most mixed; similar is the case in India. We need not raise up our ears and look startled when asked to boldly acknowledge the unhideable fact of mixture. Akbar revived the practice; but it was killed by the insane bigotry of Aurangazeb and his successors. If Akbar had been succeeded by rulers as wise and far-seeing as himself India would not have been to-day a congeries of broken and inimical units, but solid and united, with no race, caste or religious barriers to check its progress and growth. However, under the training of our English

'masters'—for which we cannot be too thankful—we are again attempting to discard these barriers, and every year examples of marriages in disregard of the later restrictions are increasing. These numbers would be much larger, were it not for the artifical hindrances set up by the Anglo-Indian legislature and law-courts.

SECTION 2.

Puberty and the proper Marriageable age. Sushruta and Vagbhata.

The section of the Indian Penal Code on the age of consent and its various miserable amendments raising the age limit from 10 to 12 and again from 12 to 13 do not take into account the teachings of even such universally recognised Indian medical authorities as Sushruta and Vagbhata, not to speak of Western authorittes. Such very half-hearted and ill-considered measures are wholly unworthy of the 'powerful and enlightened' Government that rules our destinies.

It would be useful if the law made it clear that Purohits and Jyotishis and the relatives of the bride and bride-groom concerned run the risk of criminal prosecution as abettors by taking part in the marriage of girls under the age of consent. It should also be made clear that when the word 13 is used in English it does not mean the 13th year; it means that 13 years have been completed and the girl has entered her 14th year.

The law laid down by Sushruta and Vagbhata is explicit; it is, that no girl is fit to become pregnant who has not completed her sixteenth year; and thus the earliest age at which she can become a mother will be her seventeenth or eighteenth year. In the face of this unmistakeable and absolute injunction it is absurd to be

frightened by the cry of interested parties, or to allow Dharmashastris any authority in matters physiological. Who ever dreams of consulting a lawyer about the fruit-bearing capacities of a tree, or the best time for sowing ? All this only shows how great is the danger of allowing ecclesiastical authorities to meddle with matters outside their proper sphere and knowledge, and the infinite harm they cause when allowed this power. A quotation from the Shighrabodha, which is an astrological manual studied by tens of thousands of young Brahman students, generation after generation, all over the country, well shows the lengths to which priestcraft carries its interference under threat of hideous penalties to be imposed in hells of disgusting filthiness, which the terrible imagination of even a Dante could not conceive. The Shloka runs—

सम्प्राप्तैकादशे वर्षे कन्या या न विवाहिता ।
मासि मासि पिता भ्राता तस्याः पिबति शोणितम् ॥

It describes the foully coarse measure that will be dealt out by the 'gods' to the parents and the brothers of the girls who have failed to get them married before they have reached the age of eleven. This verse is but an echo of earlier and less known *dicta* of Paithinasi and Parashara. The former says:—

यावन्नोद्भिद्येते स्तनौ तावद्देया । अथऋतुमती भवति दाताप्रतिगृहीता नरकमाप्नोति पितृपितामहप्रपितामहाश्च विष्ठायां जायन्ते । तस्मान्नाग्निकादातव्या ॥

A girl is to be given in marriage before her breasts have begun to swell; if her courses come on before marriage, both giver and acceptor go to Hell, and their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents are born in excreta. Therefore the girl should be given away before puberty.

One is astonished however to find Parashara in such strange company and as the verses appear altogether out of context in his work, that is, not in the Acharakanda, where the marriage question is regularly dealt with by every Smriti writer, but in the Prayaschitta-kanda, they seem to be interpolations. Over and above the sacerdotal hell-penalties, with unnameable foods and drinks, he prescribes the terrible social penalties of outcasting and boycott—and a Brahman who has married a menstruated girl is not even to be spoken to! Yet it is only the Southern Brahman who obeys this rule. The Northern—from Kashmir to Bengal—defies it completely, though insisting upon its literal fulfilment among the non-Brahman castes; while the Southern is more charitable to these castes!

What wonder then that the raising of the marriage-age seems to be a hopeless task when such is the teaching dinned day and night into the ears of ignorant, helpless Indian mothers. This evil state of things should be put an end to, by the passing of an Act which should make marriage itself, under fourteen for a girl and under eighteen for a boy, a civil offence, and should impose a heavy fine for transgression as also some civil disabilities. The Universities too could give some help by not allowing married boys to go up for their Entrance Examination.

Causes of the Lowering of the Marriageable Age of Girls.

It is not easy to find out the causes which led to this woeful lowering of the marriagable age of woman by the Smriti-writers in the post-Vedic period. But all indications tend to show that this process was ushered in by a denial of vedic culture and the sacraments to the woman. How this came about is not possible at this distance of time to fix accurately or even approximately. This deprivation of the culture of the day necessarily meant the lowering of the status of the woman: from that of a friend and companion (Shakti), she was degraded into 'property.' It will scarce need pointing out after the above that the more exclusively a woman is valued as a mere means of gratifying sex-passion the earlier in life she is chosen; for if the desire is not for the woman's body merely but also for companionship and union on a higher than merely physical plane, then time has to be allowed for mental and emotional maturity, the consequence of which is necessarily a higher age-standard. This indispensable change in the customs of our life will not be brought about so much by abstract academic discussions as to what are the Hindu teachings on the subject, but by the demand of our modern educated youth for cultured wives and a stern refusal to be saddled with baby-like, baby-begetting machines. Another perverse prejudice has also to be provided against and lived down. It is this. Even the English-educated Hindu does not trust that his girls can grow

without going wrong. Many will not admit it to an outsider, but some men like Mr. N. Subramanya Aiyer M. A., retired Dewan Peishkar in Travancore, put forward the plea publicly and bluntly. In a speech reported in the HINDU (of Madras) of January 8th, 1910, he is reported to have said in defending pre-puberty marriages, "If this barrier is knocked off, will it not bring into existence a number of unmarried grown up girls anxiously waiting for the wind-fall of a marriage and presumably working hard towards securing a husband by all means? And everything, they say, is fair in love and in war. Will this not add a large element of danger to the purity of woman?" He repeats this expression or apprehension twice again—'We may ask ourselves the plain question, are we prepared to exchange purity for liberty', and 'It will be a case of exchanging purity for freedom'.

When such are the fears of even those men who ought to have imbibed rational views of life and living through their long college careers, what shall we say about the orthodox folk steeped in their old-world notions and prejudices seeing things through jaundiced and sex-obsessed eyes? No doubt there is some danger or other in any and every course of human action, but, as has been well said, life is a continuous choice between opposite evils; and, to-day, the evils of pre-puberty marriages far outweigh the good thereof if even there was any, while the evils of post-puberty marriage that there may be, are smaller, and we have got to try to minimise thereby new adjustments of

domestic life and the giving of helpful and appropriate sex-education to children and youth in time.

It is most reprehensible, and a failure of duty on the part of the legislature that while rightly fixing the minimum age of discretion for civil purposes at eighteen, they give to woman the 'liberty' of disposing of her body, her most precious possession, to any designing scoundrel who has no compunctions about exploiting her ignorance and innocence, and ruining her for life at the immature age of thirteen ?

SECTION 3.

Divorce and Re-marriage

From the rescuing of the marriage laws out of the trammels of ecclesiasticism many other humane and reasonable consequences will follow. One of these will be the legalising of divorces and re-marriages of divorcees. Not that these should be encouraged and the marriage-tie made child's play. A sundering of what ought to be a life-long partnership is under any circumstances an evil, and permissible only in very special circumstances and under very carefully defined rules. But though an evil, under certain circumstances it is the lesser of two evils, and it would be criminal to refuse this remedy in those cases.

The positions of the man and the woman have to be equalised. It is only rabid orthodoxy—whether Hindu or Moslem—which dare set up a defence of polygamy, concubinage, and in general the 'rights of man' over woman and her lower legal position. The blighting influence of this degraded position of woman on Hindu and specially Muslim society, is too well recognised to need dwelling on in detail. What a grand day would dawn for India with the realisation in practice of the magnificent lines of Tennyson :—

'The woman's cause is man's ; they rise or sink
Together, dwarfed or god-like, bond or free'.

The Puranic mythos of Ardha-Narishwara, (Shiva half-man and half-woman) symbolises the same truth

more grandly, wisely, completely, and is reflected in the English phrase about the 'better half'; but the great myth, as well as the jocular though deeply significant phrase, has become hackneyed!

It needs no pointing out to any one who knows the customs of our society that as far as the man is concerned, he can put away his wife or wives and marry again and again, bigamy and even polygamy being permitted him both by custom and Anglo-Indian Law. It is only the woman of the higher castes who labours under the disability of not being able to marry again, whether as a widow or a divorcee. That this disability is mere custom-made, and has little basis in Smriti, may be shown by a brief discussion of the score of kinds of sons whose inheritable capacity is discussed in our Dharma-Shastra works, namely:— औरस, क्षेत्रज, पौनर्भव, गूढज, कुण्ड, गोलक, सहोढ, कानीन, पुत्रिका, पुत्रिका-पुत्र, क्रीत, दत्तक, स्वयंदत्त, कृत्रिम, अपविद्ध, बीजज, द्वयामुष्यायण, शौद्र, यत्रक्वचोत्पादित.

Incidentally, it will be seen from the above list of nineteen that the current notion about there being only *twelve* varieties of sons is incorrect.

On analysing this list we find mentioned sons who are, (1) *Gudhaja*, that is sons begotten on one's wife or wives secretly by persons who have not been *authorised* either by the husband—the direct owner of the 'field'— or by the reversionary heirs in case of his death etc. (2) *Kshetraja*, that is, sons begotten on one's wife or wives openly by persons authorised to do so either by the husband or by his heirs under whose *patria potestas*

the wife or wives come after the death of the husband —in short the next owners of the 'field' (Kshetra). In both the above cases the produce of the 'soil' goes to the owner of the soil. Dhritarashtra, Pandu, Vidura and the five Pandavas are well known examples. (3) *Bijaja* that is the 'product of the seed'. This is the opposite of the above; by a contract with the 'owner of the field', the owner of the seed is allowed to sow in foreign soil and reap the harvest himself. (4) *Dvyamushyayana* is a son owned by two or more fathers, due either to polyandry or to an understanding between the actual father and the legal father. (5) *Sahodha*, that is, the son of a woman who was pregnant at the time of her marriage, the result of either a pre-marital union with her prospective husband or with some other person. With the transfer of ownership of the soil in which the seed was sown, ownership in the produce is also transferred. (6) *Kanina*, son of a *Kanya*, unmarried woman. He would naturally belong to his maternal grandfather's family. The two most celebrated examples of such sons in ancient days are the great Rishi, Satyakama Jabala and the mighty warrior Karna, the unrivalled giver of charities. (7) *Paunarbhava*, son of a woman whether a divorcee or a widow who marries again, from her previous marriage. Finally (8) *Yatrakvachotpadita*, son begotten anywhere. The most famous example from our ancient history is the great Veda-Vyasa—born of a sudden and secret union between the Rishi Parashara and a fisher-woman, while she was rowing him across a river.

Readers interested in the question of various kinds of marriage and the progeny resulting from them, should study carefully Gait's All-India Census Report for 1911 where the prevalent customs are most illuminatingly treated.

Now what is the meaning of discussing in the Smritis the inheriting capacity of these numerous kinds of sons, if they are to be regarded as bastards with no claims on their father's purse? The Smriti-writers evidently thought otherwise, when they laid down rules apportioning the proper amount of heritage to each kind of son. If it be urged that most of these are condemned by them, it is not enough. While trying to limit the variety of sons, they had to take note of actual practice and prescribe rules as to what was the rightful portion of each.

To come to express Smriti-rules on the point. The well-known Rishi Parashara allows divorces and re-marriages under five circumstances. The verse runs :—पत्यौ प्रव्रजिते क्लीबे प्रणष्टे पतिते मृते etc. It will be noticed that the text given above differs from the printed ones. This correct ancient reading was discovered by Sir Ramakrishna G. Bhandarkar in a Jaina work of the eleventh century called the Dharmapariksha. The form पतौ in the current editions is incorrect.

Not only Parashara but a host of other Rishis as well, have made rules and laid down conditions under which dissolution of marriage is justifiable and is allowed, in some even recommended. Seventeen distinct

grounds are allowed of such dissolution of marriage and the re-marriage of the woman concerned. These are :— (1) adoption of the fourth stage of life, (2) impotence, (3) long absence, (4) outcasting, (5) death, (6) Satyriasis, (7) low caste, (8) bad disposition, (9) disease (leprosy etc.), (10) abandonment, (11) chronic malady, (12) same gotra, (13) another caste, (14) slavery, (15) epilepsy, (16) lunacy, (17) actor's profession.

To explain some of these heads, long absence means a period of 8 to 12 years according to circumstances ; there are 8 kinds of impotency according to ancient Indian medical books and if co-habitation has taken place- कृतेपि पतिकर्माणि—but has become impossible afterwards, dissolution of marriage and re-marriage of the woman is permitted. The case of outcasting is akin to the modern long imprisonment. In the case of Satyriasis (*moghabija*) it is evident, that relief to the poor woman is urgent, for the excesses of the mad husband would soon kill the wife; six months is the time limit and if within this period the husband has not been cured, then the wife gets her release. Curiously enough even such a wholly modern ground as incompatibility of temper is reckoned as a good reason for praying for dissolution of marriage! No stress, it will be noticed, is laid on 'virginity' as is being done by some modern Hindus. As to the general principle of 'virginity' it should be remembered that the rule is no less binding on the Brahmachari youth who wishes to marry. It cuts both ways. In fact it is simply impossible that even the majority of the conditions pre-s

cribed for the ideally correct marriage of orthodoxy, much less all, were ever observed, and it is sheer pedantry which would cite them as binding. The whole subject is most ably dealt with in the late Mr. Justice Ranade's 'Social and Religious Reform in India,' which should be carefully studied by every Hindu.

THE BRITISH COURTS OF JUSTICE ON DIVORCE

Unfortunately the British Courts of Justice, under the spell of modern Brahmanic notions on the subject, deny relief even to the lower castes among whom the rights of the woman have not been filched away as among the higher castes. How harshly this imposition of the modern Brahmanic law on these castes works, is shown amply in "Mandlik's Hindu Law." It is downright immoral of the British Government that while it supports with its irresistible arm the iniquitous claims of a polygamous husband on his wife, it denies all justice to the poor, ill-used woman. One slight instance will make the point clear and bring home to the reader the one-sided and inequitable ways of the law. Under the Indian Penal Code the polygamous husband is empowered to institute proceedings against a man with whom one of his many wives has committed adultery and have him sent to jail. An impartial man may well say if she has committed adultery she has served the husband right, and the law ought to grant her relief as against the husband, instead of playing the eunuch guard to the harem. Let there be a well thought out law on the subject, which would

take into account the ancient Hindu law and the modern Western laws and weld them all into a reasonable and equitable whole. Lord Gorrel's Royal Commission on Divorce after taking a mass of evidence on the subject issued a very carefully thought out report some years ago. Let us hope that our legislators will produce a Bill based on it, with the necessary modification, modifying it to suit Indian conditions.

Should we, with our wider outlook on the world and humaner instincts, slide back and refuse to follow even the path cut out by the heroic old Hindus, if not open out wider and better paths on our own initiative ? It is scarcely necessary to dilate on the misery caused by the opposition to the enacting of such humane, and in fact necessary, laws. How much avoidable criminality this opposition is responsible for, is scarcely known, even to the Argus-eyed Police. But most Hindus know that even such sacred institutions as pilgrimages are utilised for the purposes of getting rid of the undesired fruits of sex-failings of some female member of the family, either by infanticide, by abandonment of the child, or even of its mother,—however loved she might have been. The man might lead as loose a life as he chooses and even be such a heartless brute as to infect his poor wife with venereal diseases ; there is no remedy for the woman. As a matter of sheer justice she should be permitted not only to divorce her guilty husband but obtain substantial damages from him. It is over again the parable of the talents. Law helps those who

are strong and powerful and crushes the poor and the weak. It is as wise and reasonable and humane for the full-fed magistrate to punish a starving wretch for stealing a little grain for the satisfaction of his gnawing hunger, in the interests of the capitalist, as it is for society to punish so heartlessly, so brutally, so criminally, a wretched girl famishing for a little love, in the interests of monopolistic masculinity. All those systems, whether ecclesiastical, social or legal, which punish only the guilty woman, by consigning her to Hell, to boycott, or to legal penalties, are the products of the cruelly selfish instincts of man. These never touch the male ruffian, who escapes the consequences of his actions. All seducers of widows and unmarried girls—irrespective of their being minors or majors—should be brought under the clutch of the law. That this view is not absent from the ancient Aryan culture may be seen from true chivalrous declaration, of Bhishma, the hero 'without fear and without reproach'.

एवं स्त्री नापराध्नोति नर एवापराध्यति ।
व्युच्चरंश्च महादोषं नरएवापराध्यति ॥ (M-h. Shanti ch. 272).

"It is the man who is always to blame, never the woman ; in all the most heinous adultery the man only is to blame."

The existing distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children is quite a late one and is thoroughly immoral in that it frees the natural father from all responsibility for them and for their mother, driving these to infanticide, prostitution, even death, and exposing the children to all sorts of unnatural influen-

ces and thrusting them into the ranks of the criminal classes. It is dreadful that all this should be, when it can be put a stop to or at best considerably checked by a little change in the laws with which erring humanity has fettered itself and before which it either hypocritically, or foolishly, prostrates itself now in worship. God-made Nature's laws, however, cannot be flouted easily, and the heaviest penalties have to be paid for transgressions of them, though man-made laws may try to protect the offenders; and we are paying them to-day in India in the shape of blighted affections and disorganised domestic and social life.

If the 'orthodox' would only honestly carry out the injunctions of their own Smritis with regard to the rights of inheritance and maintenance of such children and their mothers, the current iniquities would be greatly mitigated.

SECTION 4,

THE SACRAMENTAL NATURE OF MARRIAGE

A well meant honest doubt is often expressed against this release of social life from its theological thraldom, *viz.*, that it will prove disastrous to the sacramental nature of marriage and will bring in many evils in its wake from which we are now free. It will not. We see everywhere in the world that where marriage has been made a civil ceremony most people still resort to some sort of religious ceremony, for the latter has nowhere been penalised. Making marriage civil does not interfere with religion, nor does it ever diminish the religious feelings of a man who takes advantage of the Act. It is not urged that the performing of religious rites should be penalised.

NECESSITY OF REGISTERING MARRIAGES

The advantages of making the registration of all marriages compulsory may also be pointed out. It would prevent many cases of injustice and misery which the law in its present state is unable to remedy. It is often very difficult and sometimes impossible, at present to prove in the Courts, whether Civil or Criminal, that a marriage has taken place, especially amongst the lower classes, and amongst Mussulmans also, and miscarriages of justice are the consequence, for the presiding officer feels helpless before the stringent regulations of the Evidence Act.

One example each from the Civil and the Criminal Courts will help to make clear the above point. In

India enticing away a married woman is a crime, and courts have daily to take cognisance of such cases all over the country. A suit is filed by the aggrieved man, the man prosecuted appears and admits adultery and enticing away. One would think that nothing further was wanted to secure the conviction of the man, but —and here comes in the crux of the situation—the man pleads that the woman he enticed away was no wife but a mistress. The woman appears as a witness for him and deposes in his favour. What is the presiding officer now to do in the absence of documentary evidence? He examines witnesses galore for both sides, he knows there is any amount of false swearing, and in the end it is often a toss up as to which side wins.

Similarly in a civil case a dishonest brother or any other relative can have the sons deprived of their inheritance by proving that they are bastards and not the legitimate children of the dead brother or relative. A woman too suing her husband for maintenance finds that her husband, by concocting false evidence, makes her out to be a discarded concubine instead of the legitimately married wife she claims to be. That these instances are not fancy ones, is easily borne out by an examination of the authorised law reports.

The question of compulsory registration of all marriages is very important for our future well-being and so it would be useful to briefly deal with the practice connected therewith in the various European

countries. They have all acted on the principle that it is no function of the legislature or of judicial tribunals to protect religions against the progress of thought. This principle was finely enunciated by Sir James Fits-James Stephen in his speech in 1872 on the debate over the Civil Marriage Act. In that speech he has also not hesitated to point out bluntly why it is that unsatisfactory compromises are resorted to in dealing with the subject instead of settling the question once for all upon a perfectly sound basis. Against such a procedure he says :—"There is one reason, and only one really consistent and satisfactory one, and it is this : We do not like free-thinkers ; we had rather that people should worship Kali and regard a cow as a sacred beast than that not being Christian, they should think of idolatry as Christians think of it. We look upon any religion, even those which we regard as degrading superstitions, and which we try to subvert by Missionary Societies, as better than none, and so we cling to a state of law which bolsters up some religion at least." The Christians too, like the modern Hindus, had forgotten for several centuries that marriage was not a sacrament till the year 1563 and was only made so by the Council of Trent. Luther too did not want the Church to meddle in matrimonial matters, so the Protestant countries, ceasing to regard it as a sacrament, began to regard it as a Divine institution. Nor do Islam and Buddhism regard marriage as anything but civil contract, and in none of the countries over which these two widely ranging religions

hold sway is it regarded as even a Divine instituti. It is in all of them a purely civil status dependent c contract. Coming to European countries we find France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Hungary have enacted laws which recognise civil marriages alone and of course there is compulsory registration. Spain and Austria—the two most rabid Catholic countries, naturally continue to recognize the religious form of celebration of marriages, but they too have been forced to recognise civil marriage in the case of persons who are not Roman Catholics.

Attempts are now being made in England also to make marriage a civil institution for juridical purposes and its natural corollary is that all marriages must be registered and that no more religious forms of celebration will be accepted if unaccompanied by the civil certificate. A weighty communication on the subject appeared in the *Times* of February 1911. It is reproduced below with the comments of the *Times*.

(To the Editor of the "Times")

Sir,—The agitation which has arisen among Protestants in the North of Ireland regarding the McCann case, awakening the old echoes of Queen *v.* Millis and the controversy now going on between the Bishop of London and his Chancellor regarding the marriages of divorced persons, show very distinctly how unsatisfactory are our laws upon the celebration of marriage. Into the merits of these two controversies I do not intend to enter, even were I competent to do so, as I have not sufficient knowledge of the facts. I will only say of the Irish case that, while the claims of the Romish Church to control 'mixed marriages', are unreasonable and highly objectionable, one goes too far apparently in attributing the distressful position of the wife to the action of the local priests based on the Ne Temere decree. The remedy of the wife obviously was to apply to the courts to have the law put in motion by a demand for restitution of conjugal rights or otherwise, as the whereabouts of the husband and children could doubtless be easily dis-

covered. It seems a case of lamentable superstition and misconduct on the part of the husband; but husbands unfortunately are in the frequent habit of deserting their wives and this cannot be prevented.

But, however this be, I venture to urge that the time has now come for establishing a uniform civil mode of constituting marriage throughout the United Kingdom, and making it compulsory upon all It should be in simple form, with careful provision for identification of the parties and full publicity. Such civil ceremony can be followed, and probably in the vast majority of cases would be followed, by a religious ceremony according to the belief, or in the case of mixed marriages according to previous agreement of the spouses concerned. To a certain extent statutory provision is already made for this, in the case of marriage before a registrar, by 19 and 20 Vict. c. 119, s. 12. But with the religious ceremony the state should not concern itself; the prescribed civil ceremony should alone constitute the *vinculum matrimonii* This has for a good many years been the law in France and other Continental countries, and works well in practice.

At present in England, as is well known, marriages may take place either with a religious ceremony or before a registrar without it. And the legal provisions for the religious ceremony vary considerably and are somewhat complicated, according as the parties observe the rites of the Established Church or those of Non-conformist Churches, while Quakers and Jews and some others have special privileges In Ireland the law is, I understand, similar, except that there is no Established Church there and there are a few statutory variations. In Scotland, on the other hand, marriages may take place either with a religious ceremony or by exchange of consent openly before a civil officer (*e.g.*, a registrar), or without any ceremony whatever On these latter so-called irregular marriages just a word. It is a strong argument in favour of my proposal that it will put an end to them. The law of Scotland following, as lawyers know, the early canon law prior to the Council of Trent, permits marriage to be constituted by simple consent on proof either of *verba de praesenti* or of *verba de futuro cum subsequente copula* or of co-habitation with habit and repute. This is an evil, and leads, I fear, to a good deal of seduction. Such marriages are not so uncommon as is generally supposed I observe in the Scots Law Times of last week an instructive case reported in which the judges by a majority have declared a marriage to have been validly constituted by *de præsenti* consent. The action was not raised till after the death of the alleged husband an Edinburgh solicitor, and the evidence of the consent consisted apparently of nothing beyond the wife's statement, slightly corroborated by a few

facts and circumstances. The costs of the action, even though its be not ultimately carried to the House of Lords, will doubtless prove almost ruinous to the parties, who are of slender means. The case I refer to is Petrie *v.* Petrie, reported February 4, 1911.

I think, Sir, I have said enough, though I could easily add other arguments, to prove that a system of compulsory civil marriage, uniform for the United Kingdom, is now a great desideratum and almost a necessity. Such a measure will in the long run benefit rather than injure the Churches, and in particular the matter of a religious ceremony for the marriage of divorced persons will naturally thereafter be left wholly to the direction of the Churches. If the Government will not take in hand a Bill for the purpose, as it ought to do, I trust that some private member will prepare one and thereby bring the question to a speedy issue. It may be said that there would be great opposition to such a measure in the country, and that there would be little chance of its becoming law. That is not my opinion. I have taken opportunities of asking various people, both lay and cleric, both Protestant and Catholic, their opinions on the question, and I have not, so far as I can recall, met with one who was adverse to the compulsory civil marriage.

Oxford:
February 9.

I am, &c.,
Henry Goudy.

The *Times* writes on the above letter as follows:—

A True Eirenicon.

"We commend to the careful attention of our readers the plea for a system of compulsory civil marriage in the United Kingdom, which we print from Professor Goudy, of Oxford. The proposal is suggested by the case of Mrs. McCann. With our correspondent's comments upon that case we are at present not concerned, though much is to be said in favour of the temperate view which he takes of the facts. At all events, several of the circumstances of her married life are not likely to be repeated. There will remain many reasons for giving earnest consideration, to our correspondent's contention, that a system of compulsory civil marriage, uniform for the United Kingdom, is now a great desideratum and almost a necessity. The need of such a measure is present to many minds. It would be, one might hope, a way of escape not only from the troubles caused in Ireland by the proclamation of the decree Ne Temere, but from difficulties arising almost daily in this country and elsewhere owing to the collision of civic and ecclesiastical duties; difficulties, for example, of the kind revealed in the correspondence between the Bishop of London and Dr. Tristram. It might also pave the way for what is

much needed, and not perhaps wholly impracticable—uniform marriage law throughout the empire, or the greater part of it. No one, of course, contemplates the likelihood of a general agreement as to all the legal incidents of marriage. There will remain profound differences as to the question, debated since the Reformation, whether marriage is a sacrament or whether it is a civil contract, unlike other civil contracts, chiefly in the fact that it creates a personal status. The time is distant, if it ever arrives, when men will agree as to whether marriage is dissoluble and, if it be so, upon what condition and in what circumstances. The evidence given before the Divorce Commission has reminded us all of the deeply-rooted difference of opinion on the subject. Nor can one hope for the adoption of any one form of marriage ceremony. The ecclesiastical and the secular views are here irreconcilable. But there are signs—perhaps one in entitled to say growing signs—that a suggestion such as that which our correspondent puts forward would find favour with those who have little in common. Let the Church or Churches go their own way; Let the State go its way. Let those who consider a religious ceremony as essential to marriage in the true sense abide by their opinion, and require their followers to conform to ecclesiastical requirements. Let the state insist that there shall be also in all cases a civil ceremony. No tender conscience under such a system need be coerced or wounded. Such a measure, argues our correspondent, will in the long run benefit rather than injure the Churches, and in particular the matter of a religious ceremony for the marriage of divorced persons will naturally thereafter be left wholly to the discretion of the Churches. Most laws affecting marriage have been measures of war against some Church or interest, This would be a true eirenicon."

Let us hope that in some not very distant future, the Indian Legislature will awaken to a sense of the duty it owes to the congeries of races, religions, sects, and castes that go to the making up of the Indian nation, and will provide it with rational civil law dealing not only with the extremely important affair of marriage but also with some other scarcely less important subjects, such as, the relation of parent and child, ward and guardian, and servant and master. This will be a truly beneficial step forward in the path of unification and solidarity and progress towards nationhood.

MARRIAGE NOT A SACRAMENT IN THE VEDIC DAYS

To come to the question of the sacramental character of marriage. Was it a sacrament in the old Vedic days? This is very much to be doubted. I have tried to show in my work HINDUISM,* that in the earlier days of India, marriage was not regarded as a sacrament. It is no proof that the Sutras, which are admittedly very much later, reckon it among the Samskaras. The best way and the one likely to be convincing, is to analyse the nature of the marriage ceremonial itself, apart from what the later writers have said about it. Where historical considerations have to be taken into account, it is more than unsafe to trust to persons who have vested interests, and, further, are under the spell of a philosophy which because of the influence of a growing devitalisation and degeneration, has been misinterpreted as teaching, that as the world is all Maya, mere name and form, therefore all exertion should be avoided by Brahmans except that of living at others' expense, and by all others except that of giving away all their goods to the priests. People bred under such influences cannot be expected to be very accurate in their dealings with facts.

Students of Roman Law know that contract was of four kinds and the earliest of these was what is known as verbal. This was exactly the nature of Hindu marriages in the earliest days. There was a Vag-dana first, *i. e.*, a verbal agreement between the

* HINDUISM. By Babu Govinda Das. Rs. 3. To Subscribers of the INDIAN REVIEW Rs. 2-8 G. A. Natesan & Co, Madras.

guardians. Then there was a series of questions and answers, exchanged by the husband-to-be with the wife-to-be. They are what the Roman lawyer would call Promisor and Promisee. Then the marriage took place in the presence of witnesses, human in the shape of relatives and learned Brahmans, and superhuman as Agni and other Devas and the Sun, or the Pole-star if the marriage took place in the night. The marriage was not complete till co-habitation had taken place. This was later reduced to the completion of the Saptapadi, the seven circumambulations round the fire, beside the marriage pole. The ludicrous transformations of what is now the 'marriage pole' under which the ceremony takes place, from the central pole of the new dwelling intended for the new married pair, into the meaningless toy-stick, stuck up in the centre of the court-yards of masonry houses in towns—these transformations need a section for themselves, but cannot be dealt with at length here. Such a radical change in the law was forced on it by the evil custom that had been growing up in the interval, of marrying girls when quite young. This again had probably its rise in the sweeping away of the old Vedic liberty which the girls enjoyed, of leading an unmarried life as long as they pleased. How manifold and far-reaching have been the evil consequences of this seemingly trivial change in the old law is witnessed to by the census figures which show that there are thousands of widows who are not even one year old! If the old Vedic law were reinforced and no marriages

were recognised unless consummated, how much avoidable crime and misery would be saved!

It will be seen that much of what we are apt to regard as religious ceremonial was probably nothing of the kind, but simply the only way then known to clinch a contract and make it binding. The very tediousness of the procedure—formal question after formal question and equally formal answer after formal answer and then the final summing up, and the seven circumambulations of both, with breaks between, when the woman stands on a stone roller while mantras are being repeated—all this shows that either party was free to withdraw from the contract at any point and full time was allowed him or her to do so till the very last moment, *i.e.*, the moment when they had begun to live together actually as husband and wife.

We know from the old books that it was not necessary for every girl to be married; and many elected to remain free. The Rig Veda shows that all the daughters who remained in their father's house and did not marry, received their share of his property along with their brothers; they were not deprived of their inheritance and compelled to marry as in the degenerate latter-day Smritis. We all know that nowhere, at the dawn of civilisation, had the concept of law, as we have it now, any existence. It was inextricably mixed up with ceremonials, which came to be looked upon more and more as religious, till it became a deadly sacrilege to meddle with them. We see this very thing to-day n every savage society that exists. That Hindu law

never succeeded in emancipating itself wholly from the deadly clutches of the priest is witnessed to by every single book, down to our own times. Civil, canonical, criminal rules are all mixed up in inextricable confusion with social practices and penalties; every little portion of it being only fully ascertainable by reference to the whole surroundings. Gradually however as Hindu law tried, though unsuccesfully, to emancipate itself from its religio-ceremonial entanglements it attempted to take away many acts and performances from under the ægis of theology and put them under its own protecting wings. But unfortunately and in this particular, specially, it fought a steadily losing battle, and the position of woman went from bad to worse, as the ascetic view of life gained more and more the upper hand; till, finally all her liberty and her rights were filched away from her and she was put down in the sacred books of the Hindus as the arch-fiend to whom all the evils from which majestic man suffered were due!

Appendix iv. of Mandlik's Hindu Law contains a mass of valuable information on marriage customs and it is to be regretted that it has not been printed separately as a pamphlet. It is now buried in the pages of a large and costly book and is practically unavailable except to a few.

It should be noted that loud as is the trumpeting of orthodoxy over the "Vedas" and incessant as its insistence is on the observance of the Karma-Kanda yet not even a thousand really qualified

priests who understand Vedic and modern Sanskrit and know the ritual are available in this vast country with over 7 lakhs of villages. In the majority of cases the ceremonial is improvised by the illiterate priest and bears little resemblance to the procedure of the orthodox manuals.

The sacramental view of marriage is also militated against by the glaring facts of bigamy, polygamy, marriage with women of lower castes, eight different kinds of marriage, and nineteen different kinds of sons, not to speak of what was nothing else than free-love prevailing from the Vedic days down to the days mentioned in the Mahabharata when the Rishi Shvetaketu son of the Rishi Uddalaka, seeing his mother being taken away, by another man temporarily for sex-gratification, gets wroth and is not appeased even when his father points out that it is nothing wrong but ordained by custom, and in his anger ordains that the custom was evil and was to be abrogated and in future the marriage tie was to be binding on the woman. The absurdity of the marriage law might be clinched by pointing out that according to the Digests, 2016 girls on the father's side, and 105 on the mother's side are taboo, that, further, for each step-mother another 105 become taboo, and in the case of an adopted son these figures are simply doubled. Can absurdity go any farther and are any more proofs needed of the utterly barren and speculative nature of very large portions of Hindu Dharma-Shastra ?

Four more points, namely, the proper physiological age for parenthood, prostitution, the pardah system and the restitution of conjugal rights might also be briefly dealt with.

SECTION 5.

THE AGE OF PARENTHOOD. EVIDENCE OF THE SACRED BOOKS

According to Hindu medical authority the minimum age of the parents, in the interest of the progeny, is the 17th year for the mother and the 25th for the father. The appearance of menses is only a sign of the beginning of puberty and not of maturity. The proper age according to Western medical science is the 20th year for the mother, and that this, which would sound a preposterously high age in the ears of those who are accustomed to baby marriages, is not unknown to Hindù Shastra is shown by a verse of the Brahma Purana given by Shrinath Chudamani in his Vivahatattvarnava. It runs:—

विंशत्यब्दा यदा कन्या वस्तव्यं तत्र वै त्र्यहम् ।
अत ऊर्ध्वमहोरात्रं वस्तव्यं संयतेन तु ॥

(If the girl is 20 the man shall abstain from cohabitation for three days after the marriage ceremony, and if she is still older, only one day.)

And no wonder that such a high age is mentioned, for the marriage Mantras constantly speak of consummation at once after marriage and of the position of the wife as the ruler of the husband's household. This was possible only with adult marriages. Moreover, even to-day, as a fact, it is not all castes that practise baby marriages. Some castes, high and low, find themselves compelled by circumstances to practise

adult marriages in spite of the theories of the Smriti writers. If the marriageable age of the woman is fixed at 20, it follows that the man's age must be somewhere between 25 and 30. It is in the interests of a happy family-life that the difference of age for a first marriage should be somewhere about 5 years. If it is much more, then there is such a disparity in the mental and emotional outlooks of the conjoints that there are more chances of disagreement than agreement in their views. If it is much less, then comes in an even more serious factor disturbing the pleasant harmony of conjugal life. The Hindu wife rapidly takes on the role of an elderly matron towards her husband, degenerates into a mere house-keeper, becomes frowsy and dowdy, a mere drudge and gives up all the little feminine arts of attracting and preserving love. This carelessness of appearance re-acts on the polygamous instincts of the man with disastrous consequences to conjugal felicity and a well-ordered home-life. The husband too should not forget on his part to bestow on his wife the same delicate attentions and flattery which men lavish on a mistress to rivet her love, if he would not only have conjugal fidelity but also be the enviable possessor of his wife's love. As a current Sanskrit verse has it, 'that a wife is the mother, friend and mistress of her husband,' so should he be also to her a father, a friend and a lover under the varying conditions of daily life.

The realisation of the complete continence of full Brahmacharya in the years of preparation for life, that

is, till full physical maturity, which in men occurs about the 25th year and in women about the 18th year, should not be an impossible ideal even in these days of a degenerate civilization. I use the word ' degenerate ' advisedly, for ' civilisation ' has destroyed the harmony that ought to exist between the physical, mental and emotional maturity of boys and girls on the one side, and their sexual maturity on the other side. The latter, owing to unfortunate artificial stimulation during the years of adolescence occurs 5 to 10 years much too early. As far as the male is concerned, all the Hindu authorities—medical, legal, religious—agree that the life up to the 25th year must be a life of absolute, complete continence, and endless are the penances and expiations prescribed for the Brahmachari (student) if he is guilty of even a wholly involuntary transgression. Unfortunately the Dharma-Shastra has taken a most perverse view with regard to the age of girls and the Vaidya-Shastra is not supported by it in its *dictum* of a minium of the 17th year as the girl's proper age. But as has been pointed out above, the religio-legal precepts are broken by some of the sub-sects of the highest caste Brahmans with impunity, and among these, unmarried women of 20, 30 and 40 are not only not unknown but are not very rare ; post-puberty marriages are the rule and the 'binding' nature of pre-puberty marriages has only a theoretic recognition. And the cause is economic. Unfortunately it seems that it is not by discussions and appeals to humanity and medical science that this

reform will be brought about throughout the country, but by the stern pressure of economic conditions. It is Mother Nature's irresistible grind that ultimately makes for a move in the needed direction, and 'sweet reasonableness' but seldom. The consequence is that all the grace and three-fourths of the benefits are lost.

NECESSITY OF INSTRUCTION IN SEXUAL SCIENCE

As a help towards a chaste, well regulated pre and post-married life, it is very necessary that youths and maidens should be made acquainted with all the im- portant sex-questions and be warned betimes of the hideous evils that result from aberrations of the sex- instinct, chief among them, insanity of various kinds and degrees and venereal contagion and its life-long consequences. The horror and disgust produced by the appearance of a sufferer from malignant syphilis is a tremendously more potent inhibitive force than mere ethical and religious fulminations against the evils of lechery, swept aside as they are in the twinkling of an eye before the fierce gust of passion. Continental Europe recognises the responsibility of the older to the younger generation in this respect, and by lectures, books, pamphlets, magic lanterns, and travelling museums, the needed knowledge is being conveyed to youths and maidens and they are being awakened to the horror seated at the end of the sofa of wild love.

As people prepare themselves for the three other aims of life—Dharma (duty), Artha (wealth)and Moksha (emancipation) by attending lectures and study- books, so should they prepare themselves for this

fourth aim, Kama (pleasure, satisfaction of desire, conjugal happiness) by proper studies and enquiries. The earliest available book on the subject in Sanskrit is Vatsyayana's 'Kama Sutra'; it has been published with its commentary the Jayamangala several times. The Ratirahasya is another well-known work available in print, also the Anangaranga and the Panchasayak. The late Mr. Tansukhram Mansukram Tripathi of Bombay has also brought out editions of the Nagaraka sarvasva written by a Buddhist Bhikshu and the Kuttanimatam with a splendid commentary written by the editor. In England good books on sex-education, by qualified scientific writers are popularly advertised.

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SECTION 6.

The Problem of Prostitution

This question of sex-aberrations leads by a natural transition to the ever present question of prostitution, in which not only all Hindus are interested, but every other race and religion. What is being done to control the evil? The anti-nautch movement is ludicrous. It should deceive no one but those who 'seeing see not'. For one dancing girl there are hundreds of women who are simply machines for the sex-gratification of the economic monopolist, man. It is sheer folly when not hypocrisy and villainy, to raise an outcry against these poor victims of man's lust and of economic serfdom. If these poor girls are evil, then the men who are responsible for this evil are a thousand times more evil. Is society meting out to them the treatment these pests deserve? No, in smug complaisance it closes its eyes, and even envies them in secret! Not by such hypocritical and self-righteous puritanism as that of boy-cotting nautches will the terrible problem be solved. Do not these very boycotters freely go to circuses, ballets, theatres and music halls? Where does the difference lie between the women performers in these and the nautch girls? The hypocritical non-conformist conscience imported into the country (for a genesis of which see Belfort Bax's Essays in Socialism) has brought about a rapidly progressive deterioration in the

status of the dancing girl within the last fifty years or so. From being an accomplished musician and companion she has been degraded into a wretched mercenary. Even as it is, the European depths of degradation with their huge brothels and merciless discipline and despotic autocracy of proprietors 'street-walkings' are yet unknown to India, except in the Europeanised towns like Calcutta and Bombay with their large European populations. Not even the vilest of her class is degraded to the extent of her European sister in infamy who is compelled by her owner to receive as many as 25 men a day (*vide* the REVIEW OF REVIEWS, p. 88, January 1912, reviewing 'Daughters of Ishmael' by Reginald W. Kaufman, 6/5. Swift and Co.,)—a heart-rending account of European prostitution. Economic conditions are raising up a huge proletariat whose only means of livelihood is their bodies. Men are 'hands', women are 'bodies' both to be thrown aside on the dung heap after being squeezed dry !

So long as the present economic conditions continue, and a generation educated to take a sane, rational view of sex-relations does not arise, attempts at suppression are bound to be failures. But this does not mean that the task is to be given up in despair as hopeless. A successful effort can certainly be made to control and check prostitution. Efforts were being made sometime back, in England to get the Parliament to pass a Morality Act, and the chief proposals of the Bill were :—

(1) to raise the age of consent to nineteen, the full offence to be felony, and the maximum punishment to be :

(*a*) If the girl is under sixteen, penal servitude for ten years ; (*b*) if the girl is over sixteen, penal servitude for five years.

(2) To protect all feeble-minded women and girls.

(3) To make it a felony to obtain, and a misdemeanour to attempt to obtain, consent by an inducement or threat in connection with employment.

(4) To make it a misdemeanour for any woman or girl of abandoned character to permit a boy under nineteen years of age to have immoral relations with her, or for any person to favour or encourage such relations.

(5) To extend the protection against procuration, and attempted procuration, now enjoyed by girls of good character under the age of twenty-one :

(*a*) to all women and girls of good character ;

(*b*) to all feeble-minded women and girls, whatever their character ;

(*c*) to all girls under the age of nineteen, whatever their character.

The Bill further sought to make the offences of permitting defilement on premises, abduction for an immoral purpose and unlawful detention for such purpose, felonies for which the maximum punishment was to be penal servitude for five or ten years, according to the age of the girl. It provided for the more effective

suppression of indecent, immoral, and grossly offensive literature, pictures, advertisements, etc., enhancing the penalties in each case. Additional powers were also given to the Postmaster-General to deal with such publications passing through the post.

The Bill made it a misdemeanour knowingly to live upon the immoral earnings of a woman or girl; or for a male person to solicit persistently for an immoral purpose in a street or public place. The provisions of the Children's Act, 1908, relating to persons having the custody of girls, and either causing their seduction or not exercising due care, were extended to the cases of girls between the ages of sixteen and nineteen years. It was also proposed to strengthen the provisions of the same Act with regard to the punishment of parents and others who allow children and young persons to reside in or to frequent premises kept for immoral purposes and to extend those provisions to the protection of persons between the ages of sixteen and nineteen.

There was a clause restricting the punishment of young offenders for any of the above and certain other specified offences (including rape, incest, etc.) by providing :—

(a) That no person under the age of twenty-one shall be liable to a longer term of penal servitude than seven years unless he is guilty of rape under certain aggravated circumstances, in which case he is liable to penal servitude for ten years; and that no person

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under the age of eighteen shall be liable to penal servitude under any circumstances.

(b) Finally, the Bill enabled a court to be cleared (representatives of the Press being allowed to remain) during proceedings relating to offences against morality or decency, and it also enabled the worst of such cases to be tried in camera.

India might enact a law on some such lines, with the modifications necessary to suit her conditions.

SECTION 7.

THE PARDAH SYSTEM. FALSE APPREHENSIONS REGARDING CONSEQUENCES OF ITS ABOLITION

A good many persons fear that the breaking down of the pardah or gosha will lead to disastrous consequences, breaking up the family peace and harmony by throwing unnecessary temptation in the way of the women who are now comfortably ensconced behind screens and therefore safe from the cunning or violence of lecherous rascals. Such a position displays woeful want of trust in women and even men; for to a Hindu bred on Manu it also displays a deep-seated ignorance of the way emotions work. Coercion merely as such has never made for conjugal fidelity, for repressive measures, whether in the larger life of the state or the smaller one of the family, help only to drive the evil out of sight, never to eradicate it. Loyalty, affection, love are not the attendants of the tyrant's lash. For those whose morals are loose neither the indissoluble nature of the marriage-tie nor the rigorous *pardah* system is a check or hindrance. A happy life is impossible in all such cases when one of the conjoints is of an uncontrollable polygamous or polyandrous instincts. The only sensible remedy in such cases is a timely and amicable separation. Barbarous ideas, even though enshrined in the Indian Penal Code by which the murder of a paramour by the husband if caught in the act is a comparatively venial offence, thus putting a

wife on the same level as moveable property, will never succeed in preserving such 'property,' from 'theft'. Something might have been said for the law if it had taken an equally lenient view of the offence of the wife who slays her husband with poison or otherwise on similar discovery of his faithlessness.

In no case where there is not already a state of tension will any adultery happen. Are the women of those Hindu races who do not observe pardah in any way inferior to those who do? Are they gad-abouts and inattentive to the welfare and comfort of their families? Are they more self-willed, and less moral, or less lady-like, or coarser than the women within the sacred precincts of the pardah? Again what is this much vaunted pardah and what are its extent and rigidity? Do not the Hindu pardah ladies go out freely to temples and even to bathe in public in the sacred tanks and rivers? Do they not appear before their family priests who are no whit better, when not actually lower, than average humanity? In short it is an institution of a very variable quantity and quality and does no good whatsoever. Can a system which shuts up the mothers of the race behind stone walls in darkness and seclusion avoid the disastrous reaction on the manliness and civilisation of the race? It is mere blind and unreasoning prejudice which would try to preserve an institution, all too blissful in its ignorance of the tremendous injury it is doing to the future of the nation. Often it is only the money-bred vanity of the man which would shut the woman up, even where she

was in the enjoyment of freedom previously when there was not so much money in the family. Not only is there male jealousy and distrust of the woman behind the pardah system, but also a great deal of self-distrust. Does not Manu say that one is not to sit alone with his own mother and sister and daughter? It reminds one of the Biblical story of Lot and his two daughters and of those savage jungle tribes of parts of the country where animal-like the mother bears children to her own son, a reference to which is to be found in the 'Aitareya Brahman': तस्मात्तु पुत्रो मातरं स्वसारं चाधिरोहति ।

(33-1-9): "Therefore it is that the son begets children on his mother and sister."

Even Manu, who seems to be all the time oscillating between the two opposed views about the treatment of women, has preserved embedded in his work the old practice of the host getting his friends to sit down to dinner with his wife, quite the European practice. So far has this state of things been forgotten that even among those Hindus who do not observe pardah, the women sit apart and not with the men for their meals. It should be noted that the form of the word 'Bhojayet' in Manu's verse (iii-113) is mandatory and not merely advisory or narratory. Of course it needs no pointing out that we have the very convenient habit of shelving quietly all such awkward passages when they do not suit our prejudices or go against our present-day habit. The pardah observance bears a direct ratio to the worldly respectability and monetary condition of each individual family. As the family rises in the 'social scale'

the women begin to be locked up behind the four walls.

It might come as a surprise to most of us to learn that Islam, to whose violence in India we ascribe the introduction of the system, itself issues no commandments about the veiling and hiding of women. In the Prophet's own day the Arab women freely went about with uncovered faces. Nowhere does the Koran enjoin the zenana system. How it grew up among the larger number of Islamic countries is a mystery yet unsolved.

A careless reader might think the above statements rather confused and exaggerated; for I have said that the institution is of very variable quantity and quality and not quite like cellular imprisonment; though even here one may safely assert that the extreme forms are not unknown or even very rare; as some of our poets have indulged in the boast that even the sun has not seen the consorts of certain chiefs; and unfortunately the boast is not untrue. Freely admitting the gradations in the pardah system as current, it may be said that the injury inflicted is, if such an impalpable thing were capable of measurement, proportionate to the intensity and rigidity of the system. How and when it arose it is impossible to determine now. It is a false belief which would attribute it to the advent of Islam in India, though Islam must be held very largely responsible for its great spread. The west coast from Sind downwards to Malabar and the Deccan including Mysore and Madras have been as severely war-harassed as any other part of the country, and yet there the

women, who are certainly not plain, are the least kept in hiding. Look also at Kashmir and the Punjab, which have been raided from the north and the west from as far back as history goes. There the women, and they are handsomer, have not even yet learnt not to bathe naked in public. On the other hand Behar is most stringent in its observation of gosha (Pardah), where among the Maithilas not only the mother-in-law but even the father-in-law will not appear before the son-in-law. The gosha efforts of the non-Brahman but higher caste Telugus whose sumptuary regulations prevent a woman covering her head with her Sari, only excite the risibility of the unsympathetic observer by the futility of the attempt. They must learn to use a veil if they wish to hide their faces.

The purpose of what has been said above is to convey to the readers the fact that whether the system is well-observed or ill-observed, whether it is enforced in all its rigidity or dwindles down through various grades to the comparative freedom of the Maharashtra or Tamil woman, sex-self-consciousness and sex-difference are present throughout. Nowhere in India—not even among the Nayars—has the sex-feeling been subordinated and full social freedom allowed.

SECTION 8.

THE LAW OF THE RESTITUTION OF CONJUGAL RIGHTS. NECESSITY FOR ITS REPEAL

The law of the restitution of conjugal rights is an odious law productive of fearful suffering, when not of death by murder or suicide. The country was innocent of it till it was introduced by the English in 1882, when the Criminal Procedure Code was being revised, and against the protests of a large number of the members of the Council. The sooner it is repealed the better for every one. Attempts are sometimes made to defend this iniquitous law which degrades the whole womanhood of the nation, by people of whom we can only charitably suppose that they know not what they are talking, under the surpassingly wonderful plea that but for this law of 1882 foisted on the country by foreigners, a premium would be put on shallow fickleness in the appreciation of the marriage bond! Do the people who advance such arguments ever stop to consider as to what was the state of appreciation of the marriage bond in the country before the year 1882 when this one-sided and immoral law was promulgated? I suppose the advocates of the measure would unblushingly avow that the moral behaviour of the women before that glorious date was not worth mentioning! I would finally remind all these people that while it crushes down the already overburdened woman, the man is free to go on pursuing his wrong

course untramelled by any fear of law. Not till polygamy, concubinage, and the marrying of girls to men old enough to be their grandfathers are made penal, may the advocates of the restitution of conjugal rights have the face to plead for such a measure. An Act like this is a standing disgrace to civilization and to the manhood of the nation which enforces such specific relief in the barter of the human body. The only proper and humane course in all such cases is divorce.

Let us give our women the blessings both of knowledge and of liberty, so that each acting on the other may help to enlarge the bounds of both and prevent liberty degenerating into license. If for nothing else, then for our own selfish interests let us cut the leading strings which not only keep them tied to us, but which—a fact we do not realise—act as a heavy drag on the man's activities also. Finally, let society never forget that it can really be sure of that woman alone whose virtue is not cloister-bred and is not the result of only a want of opportunity to do ill, but who acts morally of her own free-will, who knows evil and is strong enough to resist it and whose goodness does not spring out of perpetual tutelage and compulsion. Let all Indians study most earnestly Mill's grand essay "On the Subjection of Women" and apply its lessons to their own daily life.

CHAPTER III.

REFORM OF OUR PERSONAL LAW A FEW INSTANCES

SECTION I.

The Law of Inheritance

THE burden of this book is the total abrogation of the policy of insisting on unyielding conformity to sacerdotal prescription. A nation that will not relax on this point is in a state of demoralisation. By such behaviour it directly encourages lies and hypocricy. No moral growth is possible to any community which exacts obedience to a rigidly and minutely prescribed socio-religious code. In a society so tied down there is no room for individual moral judgments as such. With no liberty to experiment, and therefore no possibilities of improvement, it encourages only the narrowly legal attitude of mind, which relies on precedents and precedents alone. The facts of any particular case have only got to be ascertained and the award of punishment or reward then becomes quite a simple matter. As the time-honoured behaviour prescribed by custom has or has not been observed by the person or persons to be dealt with, he or they get their deserts meted out accordingly. It is self-evident that under the full sway of such stereotyped procedure all independent, or for the matter of that reflection on conduct becomes utterly impossible, nay a crime.

Only stagnation and not bounding life can come out of this, and instead of becoming more homogeneous and united, society will rot and fall to pieces.

The far-reaching benefits of a radical reform in this essential element will be realised when we perceive that it will make possible various much needed and long deferred modifications in our 'personal law'. For it would no longer be possible to bolster up its many admitted defects, and weak points, and even abuses, by the cry of—'religion in danger'.

To give a few instances. The present variable, unjust, chaotic law of inheritance will be changed to suit modern conditions of life. The order of succession is part of a comprehensive system of duties owed by the inheritor to the person whose wealth he or she inherits. Amongst Hindus this duty took the shape of offering 'funeral balls'—pinda—to the deceased. In other countries and amongst other peoples these duties have taken other shapes. In ancient Arabia, for instance, the first inheritor was the first blood-avenger and so on down to the last; that is to say, the inheritance went first to the first person whose duty it would have been to murder the murderer of the person whose wealth he inherits; in the absence of this first person, to the second person whose duty it would have been to avenge the murder in his absence, to the third, and so on.

The real nature of large parts of Hindu law,—that it is written by Brahmans, for Brahmans, and mostly in

their interests,—is not always clearly realised or fully remembered; nor that most of it is the result of the insensate love of logical logomachy and hair-splitting of the Hindu Legislators and their speculative casuistry and sophistry. The later the work the worse it is. The comparatively modern digest-writers—the Nibandhakaras—are the worst sinners in the matter; the purely academic character of their writings is definitely brought out by the unblinkable fact that most of the regulations evolved by them are sheer dead-letter. The method of introspective philosophy was most unfortunately applied also to such a live practical subject as law. As the spider—to use the time-honoured simile of the Vedanta books—spins out of its own internal economy, the web for entangling its prey, so have these closet-lawyers spun a web, in which they have effectually entangled not only the Hindu fly, but themselves also.

The current law of inheritance in Hindu India is mostly doctrinaire and differs in different parts of the country. We find that the latter-day Hindu lawyers, untouched by the practical necessities of the work-a-day world, have, with their scholastic interpretations, succeeded in creating such widely divergent rules of inheritance as those of Jimutavahana and Vijnaneshwara, all based on the same old texts! If the natural feelings had been consulted, pedantry would have had no sway and many an inequitable rule would never have come into existence. Instead of half a dozen differing lists of inheritors, we should have had

one common list based upon common-sense, equity and the well recognised course of natural affections.

SECTION 2.

THE LAW OF ADOPTION

Another branch of the Hindu civil law that has suffered equally badly because of its connection with the Hindu ecclesiastical law is that of adoption. Here again wide divergences are to be met with. Thus under the Mithila law, by merely taking hold of a person's hand and by pronouncing certain words the adoption becomes complete; the relationship or the age of the adopter being of no consequence. Whereas in adoptions under the Dattaka-Mimansa, the most absurd and stringent regulations are laid down and blindly enforced by the British courts of justice, which will not deviate a hair's breadth from the law which they have accepted as correct, relying on stray translations which are seldom accurate. No proper enquiry has ever been made as to the annoyance it causes to the folk over whom it is worked and whether they recognise it as binding on themselves or not. When the right of a Hindu to execute a will is recognised, where is the utility of trying to bolster up antiquated laws, which persons supposed to be guided by them, never fully believed in or practised? A will can play havoc with the laws of inheritance and of adoption. Why then be bound by the old law which causes so much injustice to the relatives, descendants and friends of those Hindus only who by mischance die intestate? It would be a much appreciated boon if the medieval restrictions were not enforced by the courts, and a

simple system of publication and registration were made compulsory.

SECTION 3.

THE JOINT FAMILY SYSTEM: WHAT IT WAS AND WHAT IT IS

Another relic of the medieval days is the joint family system. It has no basis in the old Vedic life, for every married couple was enjoined to start a separate household with its own fire—altar—Agnihotra. In actual every-day life it is now far more of a fiction than a fact, and in the attenuated form in which it exists, it leads to endless friction and waste of property. To give only one instance : if a co-parcener changes his religion and remains in the family-house and insists on entering the temple-room there is no legal method of preventing him from doing so. It diminishes the earning powers of the family by throwing the burden of looking after the welfare of every unit composing it, irrespective of his capacity for self-help, on one member of it and thus offering for the other members a premium to indolence and all its undesirable consequences. For ecclesiastical reasons, the trend of Hindu law is also against it, for the more the divisions the greater the number of Pindas. A slight attempt to remedy this evil was made in Madras, and a Bill known as the Hindu Gains of Learning Bill was introduced in the local Council by Sir Bhashyam Iyengar, the foremost lawyer of the province, and also noted for his orthodoxy, but it met with scant courtesy at the hands of the Government and was vetoed. A similar fate overtook the Bill to regulate

the law of Religious Endowments, and it is only after several decades of effort that we have now begun to have Religious Endowments Acts placed on the statute-book ; and the day of hope is beginning to dawn when the crores of rupees in the hands of the guardians of our temples all over India will be turned from frightful misuse and waste, to good purposes. The ways of management so far are hit off neatly by the Hindi Epigram : "Guardians ? No ! Devourers ! "

UNPUBLISHSED PORTIONS OF HINDU LAW

CAUSES OF CONFUSION

Large and important portions of Hindu law, which are necessary for the right elucidation of the parts published, translated and applied by the courts in the settlement of disputes, still remain unpublished and un-translated ; for instance, the works bearing on Dana (gifts), Pratishta (temple-dedication), and Utsarga (public benefactions, like wells, tanks, mango-topes, rest-houses.) The result is chaos and endless harassment to the unfortunate parties concerned. In the absence of any well-defined and universally-accepted rules, the British Courts pull this way and that way, unable to find a clear path, amidst the confusion of precedents, customs, English laws and Sanskrit rules on the subjects.

STEPS NECESSARY TO AVOID THIS CONFUSION

All this confusion would be avoided if the dual aspect of the institutions religio-social, and legal—were constantly borne in mind, and legal effects did not follow from the indefinite, uncertain religio-social

practices and customs, but only from definite and uniform law.

SECTION 4

CODIFICATION OF THE PERSONAL LAW: EXAMPLES OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

The best way of putting a stop to all such evils would be the codification of the 'personal' law and its severence as far as praticable from its canonical entanglements, as has been done in most European countries, notably France, Germany and Italy. The population of each of these countries is as religious as that of any other; but this has not prevented their being given a complete body of civil and commercial law which, while free from theological trammels, does not interfere with the practice of Religion. So it should be here. Has our religion suffered because the British Government has enacted a Penal Code which takes no account of caste or social practice; or because the jail arrangements are the same for every prisoner, be he a Brahman or a Pariah? When once codified, in however tentative and imperfect a shape, the way to make it more and more rational and consonant with the rapidly growing needs of the country will be clear. All such vexed questions as those of divorce, of the maintenance of illegitimate children and their mothers, of the rights of inheritance of widows, of the children of married widows from previous marriages, of the law of the property of married and unmarried women, the law of pre-emption, the law to

validate a legacy to a person yet unborn, and many more such would all be duly solved and set at rest.

Of course the difficulties in the way of a rational legislation are very great. There are in the country a large number of political radicals who at the same time are intense social and religious conservatives and who are very loud-tongued. Some of these 'progressives' have found their way into the legislative councils also, and pandering to national vanity, vehemently oppose all social legislation. When any occasion arises, as when a reformative Bill is put forward, and the movers quote, in support, the ancient Vedic and Puranic practices and customs of social life then these 'progressives' declare unabashed that those practices and customs are stone-dead and have been so these three thousand years, and we cannot and should not attempt to revive the liberal life of those days. If some bold speaker on the opposition side has the temerity to point out the undeniable facts gleaned from sacred and profane literature, from epigraphic records and linguistic and ethnological surveys,—that the very base of the stupendous fabric of Hinduism, the purity of blood and the rigidity of the caste system, is but shifting sand, in that the blood of the present day Brahmans numbering over a crore is very much mixed and that this mixture of races has been going on throughout these three thousand years, he is assailed with invective by the upholder of traditional (*i.e.*, medieval) privileges and vested interests. If it is 'impertinent' to point out the facts which history teaches, is it also impertinent to urge that

these medieval books, and these too misunderstood and misapplied, of a different day should not be permitted to choke off the freshly budding life of the nation in their clammy and stifling embrace?

WHERE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN AT FAULT?

The British Government has brought us to this pass of helplessness by acting on the professed principle that a foreign Government ought not to meddle with the people's domestic arrangements. This attitude would have been justified if the people had the power of legislating for themselves and thus readjusting their affairs from time to time as the necessity arose, but before the solid array of overwhelming official majorities influenced by the principle above mentioned, what can a few stray Indians, however capable and earnest, even if they were well backed by their countrymen, do? Besides, is this plea really quite honestly put forward? When the British Government did not hesitate to abolish the time-honoured exemption of Brahmans from liability to capital punishment, and the even more greatly honoured custom of Sati, when it was not afraid to prevent by raising the age of consent, the heartless and cruel wrong perpetrated on married young girls, and did many more such things when it either suited its convenience or the pressure from England was overwhelming, why should it, when conditions are more favourable for the introduction of reforms, hang back and hinder progress and development? Even now that the path of legislation has become smoother,

we are not making much progress ; because—thanks to factious intrigues among ourselves—no united effort is possible. We need not lose heart, however, as there are signs of improvement beginning to be visible.

SECTION 5.

SANYASIS AND RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS

What standing should belong to celibate religious orders and to such individuals as have entered the fourth Ashrama, but without definitely enrolling themselves in one of those orders? Under such changed conditions of the civil law, this will also be definitely settled and put on its proper basis.

Neither the spirit nor the letter of the Hindu law allows persons who have "entered religion" to hold property, nor permits them to sue or be sued in the civil courts, as a natural consequence. It does not even allow them to appear as witnesses, (see Manu, VIII-65). We cannot do better than adhere to this very thoughtful and far-seeing arrangement. To allow such individuals or corporations a standing under the civil law would defeat the very object of their existence, which is freedom from worldly entanglements in order to have free scope to develop the spiritual side of life. No temptations ought to be put in their way to help them slide back from their high and other-worldly aspirations, when they have once formally renounced the world and all it stands for. It becomes the duty of every government to help them by declaring them 'dead' for all civil purposes. If this were done, which is in full accord with the rules of the Smritis, it would

make this fourth Ashrama a reality and a source of great moral power instead of being largely a nuisance as it is at present. This vast population of beggars who are not paupers, who are indeed, in some cases millionaires, a parasite which is not satisfied with the mere eating up of the wealth of the country, but takes a wanton delight in destroying its intellect and even its morals. It makes no return for the lavish support and the slavish adoration it exacts, but is instead an ever-growing force for all kinds of evil menacing the life of the country it feeds upon. Take away the all-powerful temptation of wealth, and the numbers as well as the immense power for doing mischief of this parasite-mass would dwindle away quite rapidly. A good many criminals wanted by the police hide among these orders, which are only too often centres of vice and even of crime as every one who has to deal with them knows full well.

A second measure, which again is in full consonance with Dharmashastra, is to prevent minors, *i.e.*, youths under 21, from being made 'disciples', by making it an offence punishable under the Penal Code. Evasion of this could easily be prevented by making registration compulsory as in adoption cases; this being nothing else than a 'religious' adoption. By the irony of events 'religious mendicancy', which has been totally prohibited in this 'iron age', by the Smritis, flourishes most luxuriantly—while stress is laid only on the other prohibitions of the Kaliyuga.

REVERSION FROM 'MONASTIC' TO 'HOUSE-HOLD' LIFE.

THE BUDDHIST LAW

Such persons as find, after entering the fourth stage, that it does not suit them, should be encouraged to re-enter the ordinary household life of the world. It is but proper that the weakness of human nature be frankly recognised and allowance made for it by leaving open a door for the rectification of such mistakes. It is largely because of the unalterable nature of this act of renunciation among Hindus that so many abominations have crept in. Buddhism, recognising the fact of human weakness, allowed not only perfect freedom to go back to a worldly life, but even advised disciples, who showed any vacillation, to do so. No shame attaches to the Buddhist priest who elects thus to go back to the householder's life ; he is even praised for his straightforwardness in thus returning in good time instead of staying on and bringing discredit on the order. In fact to-day, in Burma, the majority of Buddhists go through a period of the monk's or nun's life before entering the householder's order, and because of this the percentage of illiterate men and women is exceedingly low there, and the women enjoy even greater freedom than their English sisters do. (*Vide* Fielding Hall's 'The Soul of a People,' a most informing book which every Hindu should carefully study.) There is a practice analogous to this, among some sections of the people in Bengal also.

Manu on the Subject—Commentary by Govindaraja

Govindaraja, who is only next in importance to Medhatithi as a commentator on Manu, distinctly interprets Sh. III 50 as allowing a person in the fourth Ashrama to go back to the householder's life to beget children. That such reversions to the householder's life are fairly common in the cases of obscure persons is a well-known fact, but they are carried out stealthily and not in an open manner. There is one well-known historical case also, that of Vallabhacharya, the founder of the "Maharaja" sect of Vaishnavas, (the scandalously immoral practices of which were discussed at length in a judgment of the Bombay High Court in 1871.) He was himself a learned man and did so under the orders of his Guru. When such a sect, holding sway over powerful, wealthy, intelligent disciples, accepts such reversion as good righteous conduct, there should not be much difficulty in others also recognising it as such.

CHAPTER IV.

SECTION 1.

Other beneficial effects of the abrogation of Canonical Authority

Another very important consequence that will flow out of this fundamental reform of making social life independent of ecclesiastical authority will be the abrogation of the present-day preposterous caste-regulations which cause any amount of friction and ill-will; namely the custom of taking food in the company of, or from the hands of, certain persons only, and within prescribed limits and conditions of space and garments. These regulations are relaxing, and will disappear entirely when they cease to be regarded as justified by a fancied religious need. The present practice of minute differentiation in the matter of taking food from the hands of one person and refusing it from the hands of another is wholly unknown to the old law. The absurdity of the present day practice has only to be stated to be laughed at, if it were not a matter of such grave import in its consequences. If even a Shankaracharya happens merely to see the food of a Shri-Vaishnava before it has been offered to his God, it is polluted and thrown to the dogs; but after the offering the cooked rice becomes holy, and the touch of a Pariah even does not pollute it, as may be seen any day on railway platforms in the South. Notice also the promiscuous eating at Puri, where it is a sin

to be expiated by a penance, if a person refuses to eat cooked rice brought by low-caste servants from the temple, jostling everybody in the streets. This cooked rice is distributed all over India and is known as Maha-prasada, which all castes take with great reverence! This is not an isolated instance either; for all through the South, food which has been offered to the Deity in a properly consecrated temple becomes too holy to be polluted easily, and the cooked rice is freely taken through the streets to the homes of the devout, and eaten. To object to eat would be an offence against the Deity, for the food is a Prasada—offering from a Divyasthala-consecrated temple! Yet again, there are parts of India where a Shudra may and does cook for the highest castes and no one dreams of taking objection to drinking water from even a leather bag and brought by Mussalman water-carriers too! How can a person who is reasonable believe that taking one kind of food rather than another, or from one person rather than another, or within or without a prescribed space or chauka as it is called, has anything to do with religion and will have serious consequences in the life after death? The present practice must be given up in favour of free interdining, not only among the Hindus of various creeds and castes, but also with men of other than the Hindu persuasion. For the difficulty of different kinds of food will cease to be operative, where men of other religions are concerned. Do we not see every day that it is not a bar when persons of the same family or caste are concerned? Meat-diet, or vegeta-

rian diet, is generally a matter of personal choice and it never prevents father and son, brother and brother, amicably dining together one on flesh-foods, the other on vegetables. This will also give the necessary freedom not to dine with a person who leads an unclean and immoral life, or is suffering from foul diseases, a freedom which under the rigid rules of the caste system is denied under penalty of outcasting—dine you must with a caste-man, however ugly his life and diseased his body.

In Europe, There Is No 'Touchism' As Is Often Asserted.

It is often urged by the defenders of our present-day practices in the matter, that even in Europe the higher classes do not dine with the lower classes. The puerility of the argument or the phenomenal ignorance of Western social system displayed by these wiseacres scarcely needs pointing out. Nowhere in the whole world outside the boundaries of India does there exist any such notion as that of sacredness, purity and holiness, on the one side, and on the other, pollution, sinfulness, and impurity, with many intervening grades by birth and birth alone. In Europe even the Pope, though he may not sit down to dinner with any and everybody, has no religious scruples about it. He will freely partake of food brought or cooked by whomsoever. No sacrosanct ideas enter into the affair. No King of England ever enquires about the caste of his cooks. If the Pope's cooks were only Cardinals, and the British King's only the Archbishops of Canterbury

and York or at least priests and clergymen of some sort, and all these also not chosen according to their dignities, but hereditary holders of their offices, then only could there be any safe or relevant analogy between our monstrous system and that prevalent in Europe.

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SECTION 2.

OTHER DIRECTIONS IN WHICH REFORM WOULD BE BROUGHT ABOUT BY FREEING SOCIAL LIFE FROM CANONICAL AUTHORITY.

To awaken people out of their awful nightmare of superstitions, it is necessary to let in the light of day on the system of hereditary caste, that obsessing demon, which is at the root of the evil.

Some minor, though important results, of freedom from ecclesiastical coercion will be freedom in respect of name-terminations and (the at present various and curious) forms of addresses and greetings, sectarian marks on the forehead and the body, wearing a full head of hair or shaving it, keeping a Shikha, shaving the whole body, the perplexing variety of dresses,—especially of the Hindu women, and the ways of putting them on, etc. All these are connected with the system of caste and with theology, and when once the baneful results of the system and of the interference with individual liberty which both exercise is realised all these will naturally get modified.

To take up the above points in order: all the name-terminations, Chatterji, Banerji, Bose, Ghose, Das, Dasi, Gupta, Iyer, Iyengar, Singha, Pillai, Naidu, Mudaliar, Dikshit, Somayajulu, Deva, Devi, Gupta, Sharma, Varma, Pande, Shukla, Pant, Trivedi Chatuvedi, Dvivedi, Jha, Mishra, Bhatta, etc., etc., and so on are due to a socio-religious flavour. The

mass of these is a growth of later days; the Vedas and the Puranas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata have no such names to show. It would be good to give up this comparatively modern innovation and go back to the old practice which prevails still in middle India (Madhya-desha), of giving names which denote individuals, only without thereby marking their class, caste or status. It should be noted that the newest monstrosities are even worse; such as Miss Daruvala, Miss Liquorman, of the Parsis; or Miss Bhuskate, (Miss Cut-chaff) of the Maharashtra Brahman, or Miss Mahalonabis, (Miss Palace-writer) of the Bengali. This is carrying things to absurd lengths. Let the names be such as sound well and let them be reasonable. Some useful rules on the subject are to be found in books on astrology and Dharma-shastra, but they must be used with caution.

Any attempt at the present stage of our knowledge of ancient India, to find out the exact causes of this very great change, in the naming of individuals, from the practice of the olden days, is not likely to be successful. The to us uncouth names of Middle-Asian origin seem to have vanished completely from latter-day Hinduism or to give it its correct name, Neo-Hinduism. There is no harm however in hazarding a guess and thus calling the attention of investigators to this neglected chapter of Hindu history. The necessity seems to have been first felt by the early protesting schism of the Jainas and the Buddhas. To mark off their own secession from the bulk of Vedic believers,

it became necessary to invent new names, which would show at once that the bearers of them had deserted the old flag and enlisted under another. The Bhagavatas followed, and then the Shaivas, and so on, till we find the present-day full-blown system, when the individual's name has almost become a sort of life-history of the person' hereditary caste, race, sect, occupation and status. We see to-day this very process in full swing. The Arya Samaj Hindus, the Christians and the Mussulmans are the only three aggressively converting organisations in modern India (for most unfortunately Sikhism which had such great promise in it of making a great and united India still in touch with its ancient culture, but eclectic enough to absorb all that was good and worth preserving in Islam, is practically dead and out of the field); and these three religions, no sooner do they convert an individual than they give him a new distinctive name of ecclesiastical flavour, showing his new allegiance.

The Hindu sectarians have gone the length of making it a cardinal point of their faiths, that irrespective of all one's actions good or bad, the mere pronouncing of the name of the Lord is enough to secure release from the bondage of the world and give him Mukti. Such pronouncing of the name need not even be deliberate ; and the Vaishnava Bhagavata when going into raptures over the blessed name of Hari gives instances of persons of most disreputable lives who by the accident of having pronounced the name of God, because it so happened that the name

of the relative they were calling to in their agony was one of Hari's names, evoked His great mercy and He took them to Himself and rescued them from the clutches of Yama, to whom they rightly belonged! Hence no wonder that our names, to-day, are what they are. Who will be so foolish as to reject such easy and cheap deliverance?

It may be new information to the reforming ladies in America and elsewhere, who object to the disappearance of their names after marriage, that women in India always keep their maiden name, except perhaps among a very small section of the people. Those who dwell in Kumaun and Garhwal are given the names of their husbands with 'manjari', or 'sundari', tacked on to them, while among the Maithilas of Behar the name of the husband with the termination of 'priya', 'lata' or 'ishvari' is given them. Similarly the Kashmiris take a piece of the husband's name to which 'rani' is added and it becomes the name of the wife. These are perhaps the only three communities who apparently change the maiden name after marriage. It is almost certain that this change of name is nothing more than a convenient way of avoiding the taking of the woman's name and of referring to her or calling her in a more euphonious way than that of Upper India where the usual practice is to call a woman either as so and so's wife or so and so's mother. How the custom arose nobody has yet explained.

THE PROPER FORM OF ADDRESS AND GREETING

As forms of address, we see in vogue, 'Babu,' 'Lala' 'Munshi,' 'Pandit,' 'Saheb,' 'Ji', 'Avergal,' 'Garu,' and even monstrosities like 'Ra-Ra,' 'M.R.Ry,' 'Brahmashri' and many others. They might all be well merged into a simple 'Mr. or Mrs.' in English, or a 'Shri' in the Indian languages.

The question of greeting is a thorny one for the Hindu in his own community. Outside it he has solved it by either adopting the Islamic 'salam' or the Christian handshake. This latter, though rare, is an olden Hindu practice too, be it remembered. Among the Hindus as a rule the Brahman waits to be saluted in various humble forms by non-Brahmans (see Manu, ii-126) and then acknowledges the salute, and sometimes not even that. For instance, the Nambudries as a class never acknowledge a salute. All this in the present state of the country, naturally leads to a good deal of friction and ill-feeling, which could be avoided if there were only one common form of salute for every one—be he Brahmana or Panchama, Mussalman or Parsi. The single-right-hand-lift of the salam which, again, is also to be found in the Mahabharata, seems to be a convenient form, especially when one hand is engaged in carrying something, and has great vogue; some Hindu Reformers have restarted the joining of the palms; it is a good old custom and graceful too when both the hands are free, but it is likely to take time to become common because of its strong ecclesiastical associations, and the opposi-

tion of the vast numbers of Brahmans who will not join palms to any but a Brahmana.

SECTARIAN MARKS ON THE FOREHEAD AND THE BODY—THEIR ORIGIN

Like the sectarian names, the sectarian marks on the forehead and on the body were started by individual religious teachers for the purpose of marking off their followers publicly and prominently, and even permanently, by branding them, as if they were cattle, with symbols of the mace, the conch, the bow and arrow, sometimes even repeatedly, as among the Madhvas. The circumcision of the Jews and the Mussalmans seems to be similar in origin. These certainly cannot be said by any stretch of imagination to have any real religious basis. In fact it is nothing but brutal savagery to stamp the red hot seal of ownership on live property.

Can it be that this practice of indelible branding as in the case of sacred bulls, whom no Hindu dare use, on pain of socio-religious penalties, for they are dedicated to God—was due to the necessity of pointing out to the world at large, that the person so branded was inalienably dedicated to the service of that particular God whose stigmata he bore, and that he was never again to be forced to work by any human being? He had become the 'slave' of the particular God, and could not be enslaved by any human being thenceforward. Under more settled conditions of life, a process of marking off such persons with less pain to their bodies was invented, colour-painting being substituted for

'hot' branding. We can see the force of the old habit to-day even. The various branding sects have hit on the plan of cooling in sandal paste the heated die and then stamping the various parts of the fervent disciple's body with this sandal-paste cooled die. That such religious brandings were not unknown in other climes and in other times is borne out by a saying of St. Paul's. He says:—'Henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear on my body the stigmata of the Lord Jesus.' Evidently he had been indelibly branded with the mark of the Cross and started the practice.

THE SHIKHA AS MERELY A SOCIAL CUSTOM.

With regard to the Shikha corresponding to the Chinese' pigtail'—now a thing of the past—it is difficult to say what may have given rise to it. Possibly it may be the same thing as the Manchu rulers of China brought from their distant Manchurian home; and imposed on the conquered Chinese as a badge of their domination; or it may have arisen in the hot plains of India itself, when it became uncomfortable to have a full head of hair, a difficulty not felt in the colder regions. A good object-lesson in the psychology of crowds is furnished by the history of the 'pig-tail' in China. When it was first imposed on them they resisted it strenuously, for it was to them a badge of slavery then. In less than 300 years it had come to be an almost sacred symbol, and its removal was being passionately resented and resisted by them on the declaration of the Republic. The democratic revolutionaries had to use force to remove this mark of the slave!

Even now Brahmacharis, Kaulas, and others who have taken special vows, grow all the hair of the head and keep no shikha. The followers of the Rigveda are enjoined to have five such patches of hair, but no Rigvedin is to be met to-day who has this wonderful arrangement. Evidently the ridicule of the world was stronger than the religious precept! The followers of the Krishna Yajuh have whittled it down to one patch only; keeping up the older tradition by touching the remaining four parts and repeating the mantras. It could not well be otherwise, for in Tamil India, where without doubt. there is a very large following of the Krishna Yajuh it had been the custom, long before the arrival of the Aryan settlers, to send malefactors adrift with five patches of hair on their heads. Among the Maithilas the cutting off of the top knot is a social punishment for perpetrators of all serious crimes. The Samavedis have gone a step farther and they shave the whole head, without having a shikha during student-life. The Malayali has it quite in front, just over the forehead. So strong is the instinct and force of imitation that even the 'out-caste', the Pariahs and the Chamars, grow a top-knot as a sign of their being Hindus. It remains to be seen which Veda will be assigned to them! Shabara in his Mimansa Bashya says गोत्रचिह्नं शिखाकर्म which would show that the patches of hair were meant to indicate the gotra—race—to which the individual belongs.

Attempts are made from time to time, by pseudo-scientist-religionists, to attach a religious and occult

significance to this patch of hair and to connect it with the Brahmarandhra of the yogis and the Cartesian pineal gland, the supposed seat of the human soul. If there were any truth in the idea, the wide divergences in the location of this lock of hair, or the dispensing with it altogether, would not have occurred. The Roman Catholic priests who are also said to preserve bits of occult lore, shave the precise spot where in the majority of cases the Hindu tuft is grown. Then, kind Nature herself renders that very spot bald before any other with advancing age! One may well want to know why the poor Hindu widows, young and old, are deprived of the use of such a talisman of great virtue. Why was not the practice started of leaving a tuft of hair somewhere on their head when being shaved? The appendix would without doubt have looked very artistic! The defence of the practice by invoking the help of pseudo-science would be laughable were it not so common and so lamentable because of the disastrous perversion of intelligence indicated thereby.

That it is a social custom only and has no religious significance whatsoever is shown fully by the quotation given below on the subject.

यथर्षिशिखा निदधाति यथा वैषां कुलधर्मः स्यात्—दक्षिणतः कुंभुजा वासिष्ठानां । उभयतः शिखा काश्यपानां । मुण्डा भृगवः। पञ्चचूडा आङ्किरसाः । शिखावाजिमेवे मङ्गलार्थम् । शिखिनोऽन्ये यथाकुलधर्मं च.

After pointing out the variety in the custom,—for instance the Vasishthas have a tuft on the right side only, the Kashyapas have one on either side, the

Angirasas five tufts, the Bhrigus none, being clean shaven,—the author observes that it is all a matter of family-custom, *i. e.*, it has only a conventional value and not a spiritual one. This text bears out the assertion quoted above—गोत्रचिह्नं शिखाकर्म. How such a custom came into existence is impossible of answer in our present state of knowledge. With regard to shaving as against cropping, it ought to be borne in mind that the invention of the razor was comparatively early. It is said in some Hindu books that it was invented by Sarasvati, for shaving her husband Brahma's long, white beard. It was made of copper, and even now for ceremonial tonsure the razor has to be of copper; but as a real effective copper razor is out of the question, hardening copper being one of the forgotten arts, the razor has a bit of copper tied to it or sometimes merely touched with it before starting the operation. Scissors, being a much more complicated device, came later on the stage and so could not displace the earlier razor which had taken on a religious character by that time. Even yet the practice persists, and Maithilas, Tamils, and Maharashtras shave their heads, and do not simply crop the hair in every day life. The Tamils ordinarily shave the whole of their body also, a practice enjoined on all Hindus when visiting Tirthas—even to shaving off the eyebrows. For, for each hair that falls in the sacred place so many thousand years of enjoyment and bliss will the person have in Svarga! Rather an one-sided arrangement, as no woman can ever be so hairy as a man.

THE DRESS PROBLEM. THE PRESENT DIVERSITY AS A SEPARATIVE FORCE

Coming to the question of dress we see here how religion is brought into disrepute by being made a handmaid to matters of even surely wholly social convention such as dress. A Mussalman opens his shirt on the left side, a Hindu on the right; a Mussalman's trousers must not go below the ankles, a Parsi lady must have her head rolled up in a bit of white cloth, a Deccani lady, whether Tamil, Telugu or Maratha, must have her sari tucked up between her legs, a Malabar non-Brahman woman is to go stark naked above the waist, the Punjabi lady delights in a pair of tight trousers and a shirt. Many will agree that the most becoming head dress for a man is a coloured and artistically rolled up safa as used in the Punjab. The present great diversity in head-dresses, ranging as it does from the bare head of the Bengali and the feather weight cap of the Lucknowite to the slodping-roof black hat of the Parsi (a copy of the old discarded Gujarati turban by the way) and the heavy cart-wheel red turban of Maharashtra, is to a large extent a separative force. It helps to mark off the wearers as belonging to different and alien races. What is wanted is some kind of similarity, not an inartistic dead uniformity, in the style of dress; a sort of national dress, which while being uniform in its larger aspect, allows room for individual taste and the necessary diversity in minor points. For outdoor work the use of sunhats may well be advocated; it may be admitted that they

are not pretty, but they are exceedingly useful and the prejudice against their use is most unreasonable. Field-labourers, in both eastern and western India, use a large umbrella-like structure made of leaves, which is a splendid protection against both sun and rain. It should be made more widely known, and when it gets adopted by the rest of the labouring population of the country it will make greatly for their comfort and happiness, saving them from sunstrokes and wettings, resulting in chills and fevers and thus preventing much avoidable poverty and misery, brought on by long periods of sickness and even death, due to exposure acting on a half-starved body. With regard to the rest of the dress, it is gradually changing—no man now wears, outside of Rajputana, a woman's skirt, the jama,—except perhaps the unfortunate menial servants of the Madras Government, the bearers and the peons —and people are taking more and more to the English style. This in some modified shape will in time displace all the different old styles. The real difficulty about dress becomes prominent when the attire of the women is in question. The Parsi and Brahmo ladies appear to dress with taste and elegance unless too much westernised and perverted into using stiff corsets and high-heeled shoes. The Iyengar women also dress prettily, and the harmonious and artistic blending of many colours in their saris is very graceful and charming. But they have to learn to wear some larger piece of dress over their tiny corslets.

The question of a proper dress for woman assumes very great importance when she belongs to a class practising the zenana system. So long as she hides within the bosom of the family, it is a matter of comparative unimportance what her dress is; but if she is to step out of the charmed circle and mix in the world and take her proper position in society, decent, well-fitting and artistic dress becomes a necessity. Neither the diaphanous saries of Bengal nor the enormous petticoats of Rajputana, nor yet again the tight trousers and shirt of Mussalman India, are commendable. The Telugu and specially the Nair dresses too are not at all becoming, when we remember that these ladies do not observe the parda-system, but freely move about in public. They are so scanty that they might well be styled an absence rather than a presence of dress and quite match the latest harem-skirts of Europe. India outside of Malabar, Travancore and Cochin, does not know how very primitive and stringent are the dress-regulations there. Nair women may not appear in temples with their upper cloth on; they all appear naked above the waist, and similarly before their elder male relatives. So also must a Nambudri woman appear nude above the waist before her relatives. The lower classes must always appear everywhere dressed only below the waist. Years ago when native Christian women appeared in public with their upper bodies covered, there was regular rioting in the streets, they were assaulted and clothing was torn off their backs!

The British Government under Missionary influence had to interfere and prevent the recurrence of such unseemly outrages thereafter. Since then things have improved somewhat, especially among the Nairs, who are a very go-ahead people and have taken rapidly to English education.

Now all these endless varieties have to give way to something decent which, while not impeding free movement, will add dignity and grace to the wearer.

The establishment of Museums in the larger cities of every province containing life size figures, dressed in all the varieties, would be of great educative value in this matter of evolving a national dress.

Section 3.

Canonical authority and National Solidarity.

It is sometimes urged on utilitarian grounds, even by those who on higher grounds recognise the justice of the demand for a complete severance of social life from its ecclesiastical trammels, that such a dissociation by abolishing all rituals, will tend to dissipate even that little sense of unity which the Hindus have at present; and that it is not wise to give up this solid advantage, in the interest, however justifiable on ethical grounds. of mere abstract theories.

This is an ill-considered argument. We have shown over and over again that ritualism is more or less a cramping influence when made a necessary part of religion. It tends to raise a wall between these who follow the particular ritual and those who do not. So when it is limited to its proper sphere,

and not allowed to meddle with social life, the sense of unity will increase, and strengthen, and not evaporate. Besides, ritualism is not a fixed quantity; it is ever changing. The ritualism of the Vedic days has been completely supplanted by the Smarta, the Pauranika and the Tantrika. Then there are individual idiosyncracies always interfering with it, no two men following it in exactly the same way. The pompous temple rituals have ceased to touch the religious needs of a large class of educated Hindus. They are used now mostly as occasions for holiday and fun. The ceremonial impurity connected with child-birth is coming more and more to be recognised as the source of most of the mischief connected with the special diseases of women, and as the cause of nearly half the deaths in child-birth. Ritualism has to answer for a great deal of avoidable human—and even animal—suffering and misery. It is this which makes possible the existence of priests of every caste and even of no caste, though the Brahman element preponderates tremendously, who lead most disreputable lives when not actually criminal ones, have neither learning nor morals, and make the task of patriots all but impossible by their greed and cunning and the hold they have over the ignorant masses and especially the women of India. It is because of a perception of the danger to its vested interests that orthodoxy is also deadly opposed to the education of girls.

But what has been said above does not mean that all ritual and ceremonial should be abolished.

It cannot and will not ever completely disappear. It meets a deep-seated want of the emotional side of man, and so long as humanity exists, ritual, and ceremonial will exist. In fact the proper thing to do now is to take advantage of this need of human nature, and devise new and beautiful rituals, festivals and games (like the newly started Olympic games for all Christendom), which will act as a cohesive force for all the various ethnic and religious groups of India.

SECTION 4.

The Reform of our Calendar.

As rituals and festivals will always continue to play an important part in our social economy, providing needed diversion from the monotonus daily grind of life and raising it, for the time being, out of its sordid surroundings,—it is absolutely essential that a thorough revision of our calender (panchanga) be effected and arrangements made to keep it correct from year to year. The numerous and mutually antagonistic works on Kala (time)—that is, works dealing with the use of the calendar—will have to be similarly dealt with. The calendar points out the date, and the Kala-works discuss on which date the various fasts, festivals, etc., are to be observed. For a clear understanding of the subject it will be useful to put together here a few elementary facts about our methods of reckoning time.

For all practical purposes our day is reckoned from sunrise to sunrise and not from midnight to midnight as amongst the Christians. Then again, our year number means that so many years have been com-

pleted; and not like the Christian era which means that we are in that year. For instance the Christian era A. C. 1912 means that only 1911 years of the era have elapsed and that we are in the 1912 th year; while Samvat 1969 means that so many years have gone and that we are in the year 1970. It is curious and unexplained, that both Hindus and Christians reverse this practice when specifying their age. When an Englishman says he is twentyone, he means that he is in his twenty-second year; while the Indian means by it that he has completed his twentieth year and is in his twenty-first.

The Hindus do not reckon by one single era. The Kali-Yuga reckoning, or the Yudhisthira era, never caught on; it has remained an academic curiosity. Malayalis, (Kollam era) Bengalis, (Muslim-Fasli era) Hindustanis, (Vikrama era) Maharashtras, (Saka era) etc., each reckon differently, and the New Year's days of no two tally. Even the first month of the year is not the same all over the country. And where lunar months are adopted, they do not commence on the same day. The Telegu month begins with the new moon and the Bengali month on the day after the full moon. There was no uniformity even in the Vedic days. Bal Gangadhar Tilak has pointed out in some detail in his 'Orion' and 'The Arctic Home in the Vedas', that the commencement of the year was shifted two or even three times in those old days, from one month to another. This change of reckoning has happened in the Samvat era

also. It originally started in the autumn, from Kartika-the eighth month according to the modern reckoning which commences in the spring, Chaitra, unlike the Christian reckoning, which pays no attention to the moon (which may be full or new on any day of the month), except the reckoning for Easter. Some of our eras start from a lunar date; consequently the new year's day is a shifting one; and hence arise all our present difficulties and the varieties of the current almanacs as will be shown in the sequel. The reason for this variation is that twelve lunar months fall short by about eleven days to come full circle with the solar year. This annual difference of eleven days is roughly corrected by inserting a whole additional month about every three years. The Mussalmans who also use the lunar months do not make this correction, and the result is that since A. C. 632 when Mohammad changed the calendar a little before his death, it has been steadily going about. We have been bound to this triennial correction, because all our fasts and festivals must take place on definite *tithis* which are not phases of the moon, but conventional lunar days, and, further, because the months in which those *tithis* fall must correspond approximately to the months as reckoned by the Sankranti, that is to say, certain parts of the sun's course. Thus the Holika bonfire must be lighted at the full moon, which is at once the full moon of the twelfth month, Phalgun, and also the full moon before the new moon preceding the equinox. Thus, intercalating a thirteenth month every three years, we have

kept ourselves in rough accord with the sun while observing the lunar month. In the Vedic age, an adhika-masa (probably solar) was inserted once in 5 years, the Vedic year being one of 12 months 30 days each, the adhika-masa being also of 30 days. The modern rule by which the extra (adhika) or impure (masa) month is inserted is very simple, namely, that when a lunar month is without a Sankranti that month becomes the additional month. But here too different theories about the 1st. point of Aries have come in to play their vicious part, and some years ago, Benares was treated to the unedifying spect-acle of rival almanac-makers fighting over which was to be the extra month—the previous one or the one following—and flinging mud at each other! It is fur-ther impossible to correlate the year based on lunar months with the solar year, by the help of mere rules based on rough observations, as they have been doing these fifteen hundred years and more. The reason is plain. The solar year is incommensurable with the phases of the moon; and so unless direct observation is resorted to with the help of fine instruments by highly trained observers, the calculations are sure to go wrong and the error to be an ever-growing quantity.

Another source of error is the fact that unlike the Moslems, who start their reckoning from the visible new moon, the Hindus start theirs from the astrono-mical new moon, that is the moon when it is between the Earth and the Sun and is not visible. But the ascertainment of this point of time requires intricate

mathematical calculations from correct data obtained by direct observation; and so the Hindu calendar-maker goes fumbling along, unable to attain the requisite precision and accuracy. In our reckonings we do not use the week, which is the same with us as with the English, and the days of which we name after the same heavenly bodies; nor do we divide our solar day into the twenty-four parts of the Babylonians which division has been followed by the Christians. We divide the day into sixty parts called ghatika, (ghari, in Hindi; whence clocks and watches are so called). The week-reckoning seems to be a later importation from Babylon, after we had settled our calendar, and so it did not acquire any religious significance, remaining only a secular convenience.

THE ALMANAC

The almanac is five-limbed (Panchanga). The five things it deals with are the vara, the tithi, the nakshatra, the yoga and the karana. Vara is the civil day from sunrise to sunrise, and while actually variable, it is treated for all practical purposes as a constant quantity. Its old division into 60 ghatikas is being supplanted fast by the Western division into 24 hours. The vara may be called the natural day in contrast with the tithi—'artificial' day. As there are 15 tithis and 14 days roughly in a lunar fortnight, a tithi is generally less than the actual day, though sometimes more. A tithi is unlike the vara; it does not commence with an easily recognised point of time, that is the sunrise. It often begins or ends at other moments of the day. It is the

period of time in which the positions of the sun and the moon differ by 12° and its multiples. These tithis are differentiated from each other by ordinals except that the fifteenth tithi of the 'bright' fortnight is called Purnamasi and that of the 'dark' fortnight Amavasya. On Amavasya day, the real moon is between the earth and the real sun, as already pointed out above. So the apparent sun and the apparent moon may be imagined to move in the same circle of the sky, though as a matter of fact, they move in different circles. The sun and the moon move away from this imaginary point of contact with varying motions on different orbits and come again, more or less, together on the next Amavasya. By this time the sun will have moved, speaking very roughly, 30° along his orbit and the moon will have gone the whole round of the sky and this 30 besides. The difference between the moon's motion and the sun's motion will have been one circle of the sky, 360°. The time taken for the moon's circuit is called a lunar month. This lunar month is divided into 30 tithis—each tithi being the time during which the moon goes away from the sun by 12°, calculated according to the sun's and the moon's motion during that tithi. As the sun and the moon move in different orbits, this difference cannot be calculated; so only that part of their motion (in longitude) which corresponds to a fixed circle, called ecliptic, is taken into consideration. This figure 30 is quite an arbitrary one, not corresponding with anything in nature, but represents the 30 real days of the old Vedic month. It

will now be realised how these tithis are 'gained' or 'lost." If the tithi happens to be shorter than a civil day, the sun does not rise in that tithi and it becomes *non est*; but if it happens to be longer, then the sun rises twice and hence results a reduplication of that tithi.

Originally the Nakshatras corresponded to the Tara constellations, the 27 asterisms (lying along the path of the sun), more or less near all of which the moon goes once a month. As the moon at the full is near now one and now another, the practice sprang up of distinguishing the lunar months by the nakshatra in the neighbourhood of which the moon was at the full. But when long centuries afterwards our astronomers began to reckon by reference to the solar Zodiac, these nakshatra month-names—for instance Chaitra from the Chitra asterism and so on—were brought into connection with the signs of the Zodiac by the rule that the Chaitra Shukla should start from the new moon before the sun entered Aries. Sayana-Nakshatra has little to do with the stars, as it means merely the 1/27th part of the sky, *i.e.*, (an arc of 13°-20′) more or less near which the moon once was on any day. This extension of the meaning of the term from asterisms to the 1/27 portion of the grand circle of the Zodiac, made future correlation impossible. For, if the precession of the equinox were to be taken into account, then the Sayana-nakshatra (the arc of the sky) will be changing its position from year to year and will not correspond roughly to the nakshatra (Tara, constellation), as it will do if no account is taken of this disturbing factor of the

precession of the equinoxes. As the phala (influence) of the moon in the nakshatra can only be cast when the position is a fixed one, the Sayana calculation is neglected in favour of the Nirayana in the interests of astrology. Astrological jugglings pay; so what does it matter if the calendar is wrong and gets steadily more and more so every year with regard to the seasons?

The yoga is the period during which the sun's motion and the moon's motion added together become equal to 13°20'.

The karana is the period during which the difference between the motion of the sun and of the moon is equal to 6°.

We thus see that except the Vara all the rest are periods of time neither corresponding to anything useful for civil or astronomical purposes, nor things easily calculable. A most real practical difficulty stares us in the face, as the result of wrong almanacs. Our calculations of the year and months once co-ordinated with the division of the year into six seasons. Unless the necessary corrections for the phenomenon of the precession of the equinoxes (ayana) are regularly made, the seasons will tend to move away from the months associated with them. That is to say, if the Panchanga is based on the Nirayana (that which does not allow or take note of ayana) calculation, our spring festival Holi will gradually be pushed on to the rains, the harvest festival (Makara Sankranti) into the sowing season, and so on! Already an error of about 23 days has gradually crept in; and our reckonings of the sea-

sons are out by so many days from the real beginnings of them.

The Greek astronomer Hipparchus in the second century before Christ was the discoverer of the phenomenon of the precession of the equinoxes. He found from a comparison of his own observations with others made a hundred and fifty years earlier that there was a difference of about 51° every year. The calculation which allows for this is Sayana and that which does not is Nirayana.

Now-a-days we are faced with the strange phenomenon that the orthodox Jyotishi almanac-maker, while sticking hard to his Nirayana ways for producing the Panchanga, yet out of fear of his ignorant clientele, makes a surreptitious use of the foreign Nautical Almanacs for predicting eclipses. This use of "mlechcha" material was made imperative by the imminent danger of the whole system of astrology being thrown overboard. Year after year it was seen that there was something radically wrong and that predictions of such objective phenomena as eclipses were out by hours. The poor astrologer found himself badgered even by the ignorant villager who was beginning to lose faith in his Jyotishi and had begun to ask him awkward questions. The falsity of astrology was being brought home to him by unmistakable object-lessons. If such an unmistakable objective phenomenon as an eclipse could not be predicted accurately, then what about matters beyond human ken? The danger of losing the patronage of the chief bread-sup-

plier was urgent; and hard, relentless, economic pressure soon broke down the walls of ignorance and prejudice to this extent, that a stupid, unworkable, illogical compromise has been arrived at, and we are being edified by having eclipse-predictions made according to European tables and the other calculations for 'unseen' and 'unseeable' results based on the time-honoured incorrect data!

In 2500 B.C. the 1st. point of Aries was in Krittika. The Hindus took it straight off from the Babylonians. There are clear traces of continuous intercourse between India and what is modern Persia and Turkistan, etc., in those early days.

The Vedic seers did not know of the disturbing influence of the precession of the equinoxes which, as we have pointed out above, is a Greek discovery, and which was most likely learnt by the Hindu astronomers of a later day, not directly from the Greeks but from the Babylonians, who had derived their knowledge from the Greeks. As this knowledge came late in the day, it did not get embodied in the sacred literature, and the Nirayana reckoning held supreme sway. The earliest mention to be met with in Sanskrit literature of the Sayana reckoning is in the Surya-Siddhanta which is comparatively a late work. Some European scholars even go the length of asserting that the single, almost stray, mention of the Sayana reckoning is a later interpolation therein. The Vedic year is a very primitive arrangement consisting as it does of 360 days only, with an intercalary month every 5 years, as against

the modern arrangement of a year of 365 days and an intercalary lunar month about every 3 years. The equinoctial point is technically known as the 1st. point of Aries. It has now shifted to Mina, i.e., Pisces since the day when the first observation was made and it was found to be in Asvini, i.e., Aries, while during the Vedic times it was in Orion, i.e., Mrigashiras. Notice has been taken by the Hindu astronomers up to the time when the point had shifted to Ashvini,—since then no corrections have been made, and the almanacs have been getting more and more inaccurate as year has succeeded year, with reference to seasons and nakshatras.

The only method available now for rectifying the error is to copy the Nautical Almanaç, till the country evolves the requisite mathematical knowledge and the necessary books, as also the organisation necessary to keep them correct.

Why should not Hindu India adopt one era and begin its new year on the same day for the whole country, as also decide whether the month is to be reckoned from the dark or the bright fortnight?

Coming to works on Kala we are faced with a curious difficulty, which would be really ludicrous if its consequences were not so grave. The difficulty is that there is no generally recognised binding arrangement which would make all Hindus observe the same fast or festival at one and the same time. For instance, the Krishna-Janmashtami occurs on two or three days, and these not consecutive either; some of these days

coming a month after the others. The same is the case with the Shivaratri. The fortnightly Ekadashi is also an object of divergence. And so on endlessly. Surely Shri Krishna could not have been born on different days occurring in different months!

The trouble caused in reckoning by the gain of a tithi to be rectified by the loss of another should also be set right.

SECTION 5.

Vivification of the Spoken Languages of India, and the Place of Sanskrit in National Life.

The freeing of social life from ecclesiastical domination will pave the way for restoring to the living tongues of the country their lost rights, with the necessary corollary, the education of the masses. In Europe after the successful Protestant revolt against Roman Catholicism a similar thing happened. Once the power of the priest was broken and the selfish, narrow, class-privileges abolished, the people came into their own; Latin was relegated to its proper place on the scholar's shelves and the vernaculars were vivified—even in those countries where the people still clung to their old religion. Such will be the case in India also, once again, as in the Buddhist period when the spoken language became the vehicle of education and culture, unless history belies itself.

The living languages will no more be treated as the Cinderellas of the family; they will take their rightful place as the queens of the household, instead of being the drudges they are at present. There is no possibility of the tremendous educational problem of the country being solved satisfactorily till Sanskrit is brought down from its high sacrosanct pedestal, unswathed from its halo of mistifying holiness, looked at more rationally, made more accessible and easy of

acquisition by commonsense methods of study, and assigned its rightful place in courses of cultural education, while the living tongues are given their heritage, of which they have been so long deprived to the grievous loss of the people.

Even Aurangzeb—bigoted Mussalman that he was—did not fail to recognise the far-reaching evils of the Arabian education imparted in his day to the children of Moslem gentlemen. He bitterly condemned the neglect of the living tongues of India in favour of Arabic and deplored the disastrous consequences of all educational ideal which wanted to make the Indian Moslem a replica of the Arab. He reproached his old tutor for not training him in those arts and sciences which would have been of inestimable use in his daily work, and instead, stuffing him with knowledge which was useless. (Vide, Manucci's 'Mogal India', 2nd Vol. pp. 32, Eng. Tran. by W. Irvine). All Hindus should take to heart the wise words of the powerful Emperor, who, as the result of such early narrow training, became a religious fanatic, and acted so that the magnificent throne of India was lost to his family.

Yet there are some good and worthy persons who patriotically wish and hope to make Sanskrit the common vehicle of speech throughout India. We can only say that they dream vain and idle dreams. That even in the days of Manu, in the heyday of Brahmanical supremacy, a knowledge of Sanskrit was not universally diffused even among Brahmans

is clearly proved by chapter ii—123 where it is laid down that if the Brahman, greeted with Sanskrit words, is so ignorant as not even to understand such simple, elementary Sanskrit, he is to be greeted in the vernaculars. Ignorance of the language amongst Brahmans must have been rather common before the legislator could have thought of framing such a rule.

Whatever may have been the state of affairs in the far off Vedic days, among that probably comparatively small but very potent band who promulgated the sun and fire cult and the Varnashramadharma ideal, and made them the religion of India, dispossessing and absorbing all the various cults and civilisations prevalent among the numerous tribes inhabiting the land, till that cult and dharma themselves became transformed almost beyond recognition. Within historic times Sanskrit has mostly been only a Dictionary tongue, a hieratic language, in which the priests and learned men enshrined their lore. The Epics, the Smritis, the Puranas, the Sutras, were all composed by people whose "mother" tongue apparently was not classical, polished, standardised Sanskrit. What Hindu society, then, in the heyday of its power and glory failed to achieve, is scarcely practicable now!

We have to constantly remember that the future Indian nation will be built on different lines from those of the old-world polity; and that religious conformity will have to give way to more worldly considerations and people must cease to lay stress on the worship of the same gods for purposes of national homogeneity.

And we have to realise how grave is the harm that is being done by this blind worship of everything written in the Sanskrit language. It ties us to a long dead tribal past with its customs and aspirations. "No progress, no deviation from the world-old ruts"—has been the inevitable result of this blind worship.

Keeping all this in mind, we may now say something as to what seems to be the real character of the literature in this language and the kind of influence it has exercised over the character and development of the various people dwelling in the country and professing Hinduism. In doing this we will deal with Sanskrit in its literary, social and national aspects rather than its religious associations.

The major portion of the extant Sanskrit literature belongs to the period when the growth of the indigenous Hindu civilisation had been checked, and its decay had set in with the influx of foreign invaders and the enormous mass of alien elements which they brought along with them. This mass, while it was absorbed, was never perfectly assimilated, and it was always jarring with the old well-ordered polity and producing a chaotic condition of things. The literature produced among such surroundings was bound to be introspective and unpractical in its nature and hence largely unsocial in its character and results. If the fact, that the majority of the books which guide the Hindu's daily life to-day are comparatively quite modern and diverge from the really ancient doctrine and practice, and even do not agree among

themselves, were recognised and accorded due weight —they were written after the days of Sankaracharya, when Buddhism and its literature were overthrown and the Mussalmans had already commenced the invasion of Western India—then the path of the reformer would become much smoother.

Our Present Position.

The world is moving fast all round us, and even when there is no pressure from outside, considerable friction is caused by our refusal to move on along the stream of time ; we are not only left behind but receive considerable hurt as well from the elbows of our pushing neighbours ; for, as our luck would have it, we have not succeeded in securing even the isolation for which we sacrificed our national soul. Like the fabled Trishanku of yore, we are hanging in mid-heaven, neither of this world nor of the other, the laughing stock of all. The attempts of some of our misguided folk to revive the long dead past and take the country completely back to it may well be characterised in the words of the Upanishad अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः "The blind leading the blind !". Such attempts are as profitable and as reasonable as would be that of one—if there was such a one—who would despise his present rural and urban humanity and long to get back to the halcyon days of his arboreal existence ?

The Immoral teachings in many Puranas and their effects.

One fact deserving serious attention is the demoralisation caused by the popular readings and reci-

tals of the Puranas. These books are works of a very mixed quality. Large portions of their contents are positively unsuited for children, women and common folk ; some of their stories, as at present worded, seem frightfully immoral ; they ascribe vicious and sinful behaviour to this god or that saint and, in the current degenerate condition of priestly intelligence and character, instead of the moral being pointedly drawn and emphasised that even gods and saints are liable to err grievously under the influence of selfishness and passions, the intelligence of the people is stultified into regarding such conduct as right and proper and even as fit to be imitated. This has been a very serious corrupting factor in the ethical notions of the people and in their culture. The "Vyasa" who recites and expounds the books, is generally a man of low intelligence, little education and much selfishness ; and he, always with both eyes on the main chance, generally fastens and expatiates only on those portions, often crude and most likely interpolated, which extol and aggrandise the Brahman and emphasize the necessity of making presents to him perpetually. The verbal jugglings indulged in on the lines of the Brahmanas *i.e.*, the portions of the Vedas so named and the Nirukta when explaining Vedic stories do not help to mend matters. The disastrous reaction of such teachings on civic virtues was pointed out long ago by Plato in a magnificent passage of 'The Republic' where with merciless logic he has exposed the utter fallacy of the position of the advocates of Homeric teachings and

the ruin wrought by them in the moral sense of the Athenian youth.

The Reformer's Duty to Work in the Living Languages.

Let us then give Sanskrit its proper place and come to the living tongues. The essential idea and ideal underneath the Purana—Itihasa, whose importance is indicated by calling them the fifth Veda, is to spread the knowledge of History—history in its broadest, deepest, highest sense, the story of the evolution and dissolution of a whole world system. Modern thought is in entire accord with this essential idea. To put it into successful operation, in accordance with the changed conditions, let us compile new Puranas, in the living tongues of the country, and make them the vehicles for conveying the lessons that the life of to-day teaches us. Every reformer to whom the welfare of the masses was at heart and not merely of a select few hankering after a special place in heaven in which no other was to be allowed, had always made the spoken languages the vehicle of his teaching.

Such reformers have studiously avoided the highly complex and wholly artificial language of a narrow set. They broke through the traditional thraldom to Sanskrit and all that it implied. They dared to look forward and taught the people to do the same. They threw themselves head-long into progressive movements and never once pined for the 'glory that was no more'.

SECTION 6.

NECESSITY OF A COMMON LANGUAGE.—HINDI AND ITS CHANCES.

For national progress and unification it would be an immense advantage to have one and only one language for the whole of the country, as also one script. But as this may not be practicable all at once, though Hindi is spoken by about half and understood by fully two-thirds of India, it would be useful to fix attention on a few of the most widely-spoken tongues for the time being; making these the vehicles for national education and enlightenment. In the nature of things Sanskrit can never appeal profitably to any but to an exceedingly few; and those Indian Universities which insist on a modicum of Sanskrit, instead of making it optional, not alternative—are doing great disservice to the cause of Indian education. English appeals to a much wider class, but even that, though a living progressive language and the tongue of those who are at the moment India's rulers, can never displace the mother-tongues for the masses. If education is to reach them, it can do so only through their mother-tongues; but attempts, such as were lately made by the Government in Bengal, in Sir Andrew Fraser's regime, to give literary fixity to the various dialects are exceedingly undesirable. They will only help to create more confusion. The endea-

vour should be to minimise such differences where they exist and not to enhance them. The living languages, however, have to be released from the bondage of Sanskrit and Arabic, which the believers in 'high style' and 'High Hindi' and 'Sadhubhasha' or 'Arabicised Urdu' are doing their best to impose on them. These misguided enthusiasts do not evidently recognise the elementary principle that the object of language is to express thought and not to hide it. Purism, and priggish pedantry, whether Maulvi-born or Pandit-born, has to be suppressed mercilessly, though of course Sanskrit, and to some extent Arabic, have to be treated as quarries for digging new counters of thought-form, when words are not available in the vocabulary of the current language! Further, the mania for translating, instead of adopting straight away, technical words has to be awarded a similar drastic treatment. It is madness to hobble ourselves in such wise when we could help ease and effectiveness of expression in our living languages by direct adoption of the technical words of European thought and science. Such a procedure has two supreme advantage over the other. It helps to fix one technical vocabulary for the whole of the country and its various languages thus making the translator's labour easy. It also makes it easy for one who has studied the subject in his own mother-tongue to take it up in any other language and even in English, with only a very elementary knowledge of the language, which would not be possible if all the terms were new to him.

Taking all these factors into consideration, we arrive at the inevitable conclusion that the special study of Sanskrit should be left in the hands of those who can study it critically and have the necessary leisure, though some acquaintance with it may well be made as at least optional part of the courses of general education for the ordinary Hindu student; while every effort should be made to improve and enrich the languages which are the living and only possible vehicles of the throbbing national life and thought.

SECTION 7.

COMMON SCRIPT.—ROMAN

As a great deal of agitation is taking place over the question of script, and some bad blood even has been caused between Hindus and Moslems over the respective merits of the Arabic or Urdu characters and the Devanagari, it would be useful to go briefly into the subject of the various scripts of India which are decendents of the Brahmi, before pleading for a common script.

The very earliest Hindus seem not to have known the art of writing. Modern research leads towards this conclusion which is borne out by the method of memorising for preserving the Vedas. If in those ancient days, the art had been known, the Vedic Rishis would not have undertaken the tremendous labour of committing to memory their vast literature ; and so strong is the force of habit and the prejudice against committing to writing the Vedas, that even to-day there are Brahmans who know by heart matter which, calculated in modern style, would come up to fully one hundred thousand verses or two hundred thousand lines ! How desperately were they put to it, to preserve the Vedas, is further attested by the eight different ways of remembering the text, so as to eliminate all chances of either lapses of memory or deliberate tampering. These eight ways are known to the Sanskritists as the Ashta-vikriti, to describe which

would require too much space, and further would be of no general use. It was the traders—the Vaishyas—who first brought a knowledge of writing from the lands they had been to for commercial purposes. European paleographists are not prepared to concede an earlier date than Circa 700 B. C. when writing first became known to the Hindus. I am, however, inclined to think that the date should be pushed back a good deal. A verse in the Atharva Veda mentions the taking out of the Vedas from a box before commencing to study. The very latest date that can be assigned to this Mantra cannot be later than Circa 1000 B. C. For the foreign imported script to have become modified for our purposes and to have lived down the hieratic prejudice against its employment, one would be on safe ground to suggest another 200 years.

It was this script which later became known as the Brahmi and was the parent of some of the Asokan scripts. That monarch used also another script in his rock-incised edicts, namely, the Kharoshtri, that is to say, the script of the land of khar (donkey) and ushtra (camel)—the modern Kashgar and the country round it. Buhler calls it Kharoshthi, i. e., like the ostha (lip) of a donkey. But this is a mistake as has been pointed out by Sylvain Levi. The Devanagari script which we use to-day is not the parent of all the other modern scripts, namely, (1) Tibetan, (2) Newari, (3) Burmese, (4) Sinhalese, (5) Pali, (6) Sharada, (7) Tamil, (8) Grantham, (9) Telugu, (10) Malayalee, (11) Kanarese, (12)

Maithili, (13) Bengali, (14) Uriya, (15) Ahom, (16) Gurmukhi, (17) Siamese, (18) Cambodean, etc. All these scripts have descended from the Asokan Brahmi, their divergences being due to the materials on which and with which they were written. Unbaked clay, stone, metal plates, birch bark, palm-leaves, and wooden boards were used as materials to write or engrave on. The iron stylus, bamboo, porcupine quill, goose-quill, the mid rib of the palm-leaf, the reed and the brush were used as pens. Paper was unknown till about 1,000 A.D. when it was brought into the country by the Moslem invaders. Ink too was unknown. No mention has been found of the Greek and Roman systems of writing on boards covered with melted wax. Buddha is said to have learnt his alphabets by tracing them on sand. The Devanagari alphabet itself is a modification of the Brahmi lipi and came into existence about the year 800 A.C.

With the ground thus cleared, and the fact realised that there is no inherent ‘ sacredness ’ in the Devanagari character, and that, the scripts now current and numbering more than a score, are all sisters descended from one foreign parent who adopted in the course of time Indian ways and was so to say Hinduised, and that the divergences between the sisters are due solely to the materials on which they were fed and reared, we should be prepared now to put aside prejudices and take stock of the situation in a rational spirit. While I recognise that in themselves the Devanagari characters are no less beautiful than any others, and also

that a knowledge of them is indispensable for everyone who would be a Sanskrit scholar, I cannot help being aware at the same time, that an insistence on a knowledge of it for all Hindus is undesirable. I do not trouble myself with the Arabic script here. Mr. (afterwards Sir Reginald) Craddock pointed out in his speech to the Mahomedan Education Conference on December 29th, 1910, that their insistence upon Urdu was one of the chief stumbling blocks in their way and asked them whether it was 'fair to require 96½ p. c. of the population to learn Urdu or 3½ p. c. to learn Hindi'. If our Moslem fellow countrymen will not learn wisdom, and drop the agitation about Urdu, there is no need that we too should follow them and lose commonsense in this battle of scripts. By all means if we are so minded and have no consideration of time to hamper us, let us preserve all this wonderful variety—a variety which exists nowhere else in the world—and amuse ourselves deciphering old forgotten Mss. But this is to be a recreation of the classes. The masses must be released from the incubus, and it is in their interest and in the interest of good Government, as also of the many amenities of life which an adoption of the Roman script would bring us, that I would plead for its introduction. The belief that the Devanagari is a perfect alphabet is wholly mistaken. No alphabet that ever was or will be can ever be a perfect phonetic representation of the sounds that issue from diverse living human throats. One would scarce think that it was necessary to point out this elementary fact

to the Hindu who was familiar with the variety of the pronounciation of Sanskrit, from province to province and even of Vedic Sanskrit where at least one would expect uniformity. The further fact of accent-signs being necessary for the Vedic Mss. should also show conclusively that the Devanagari is no heaven-sent exception to the rule. The sounds of a living language are always steadily, though slowly, changing. There is no such thing as a standard unchanging pronunciation. Even a little thought would show that it could not be otherwise. Life means change, growth, decay; while immutability, petrifaction, means death. At the moment that the first man materialised his living spoken voice by symbolising it in inert matter, at that moment, it was a correct and accurate representation and that too largely for him only, for even his pronunciation is ever imperceptibly but surely changing and never continues in one stage. Then let us not close our eyes to facts. Let us realise that man was not invented for alphabets but that he invented them for his use. They are not an end in themselves. They are instruments for enabling the spoken word to appeal to the eye. As we have allowed no nonsense to stand in the way of our using the railway and the motor car in place of the time-honoured springless bullock-cart; the telegraph instead of the slowly moving foot messenger; and the printing press instead of the laboriously written manuscript; so in this case too let us put aside all passion and prejudice and sensibly adopt the most paying script.

Romic is such a script. By Romic I do not mean the English alphabet, many of the symbols of which have more than one value, but the modified Roman with fixed values as used by the International Phonetic Association. This alphabet is richer in symbols than any other existing alphabet, because the modern phonetician has profited by the mistake of his predecessors and has learnt to analyse sounds more accurately and scientifically. Many advantages will accrue from the adoption of the Romic script :

(1) It will at once bring India into line with nearly the whole of the world.

(2) For the common people, and the poor, it would mean cheap books, easy and rapid learning, facilities in travel and in correspondence. They would be able to decipher sign-boards, address letters, consult railway time tables, read and write telegrams—for whatever the language used, if the character is Roman every telegraph office accepts the message.

(3) The public work of the innumerable judicial and executive officer of all the many departments of administation which play such an important part in the life of the country, would all become greatly simplified, and much waste and many abuses obviated.

(4) Shorthand and typewriting would become easy and simple.

THE DUTY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

It is the business of the Government in India to see that the interests of all classes of

the people are considered and that efficient administration is secured by making it possible and easy for all sections of the administered and the administrators to come into closer touch with each other. This can be definitely promoted by the gradual abolition of every other local script in use in every branch of administration and the substitution of the Romic in its place. This substitution can be commenced as an optional alternative, to begin with. In all Primary schools also, the use of the Romic script should begin to be taught side by side with the particular script of the locality. The Government should have commenced long ago the education of public opinion on the subject, with the help of the leaders of the people. There will, of course, be much opposition in the beginning, as there always is to every reform every where ; but it will all quiet down in a short time for the people will have realised its extreme utility within a few years—its utility, not only as a promoter of practical convenience in the daily affairs of life, but of a common understanding and of national and spiritual unity.

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CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSION.

SECTION 1.

TRUE EDUCATION—THE ONLY MEANS THROUGH WHICH REFORM CAN BE CARRIED OUT.

It now remains to point out how we may expect to realise our aim of freeing Hindu society from its self-imposed ecclesiastical fetters, and enabling it once again unhampered by the dead weight of the mediaeval past, to run in the race of life and win it, as in its ancient days when the Vedic mantras were being composed. There is only one way to this goal. It is through education, in its best and truest sense; and not the education which gives a degree, or teaches parrot-like to repeat shibboleths. Heart, head, and hand, all three must be trained by an artistic, scientific and practical education; an education which is imparted not only within the four walls of a room, but out in the open, in fields, in jungles, on the mountains, on the sea. An education that merely teaches the deadly gerund-grinding of Sanskrit grammar, on which even Sankaracharya could not resist pouring his wrath and contempt, is but a farce. In a fine hymn he bursts out, "What will it profit a man when he is dying, to know that the root Dukrin means *to do*?" Let us 'do' then, before it becomes too late; late it is already in all conscience! The education that the British have been

giving us, is no less fatal to our true interests than have been the mediaeval methods of the Pandits. The former fills the fresh young mind with the crude facts of European sciences and the results of European thought on the various departments of human activity, which facts and results are but seldom assimilated and seldom become fruitful; while the latter has been for generations choking the budding life with the deadly miasma of ritual and ceremonialism and filling it with empty, meaningless words and the silly conceit born of such soul-less studies. Education, to become a living factor in the life of the nation, should be so moulded as to bring out all the bright activities of a child—rouse his or her keen fresh perceptions, induce it to observe accurately, to record correctly, to infer justly, and to express cogently. In short, the scientific method has to be taught as against merely scientific learning. J. S. Mill fully uderstood the evils of such mere storing of memory, as against the method of discovery. He says in his 'Autobiography' (p. 239):—'I have learnt from experience that many false opinions may be exchanged for true ones, without in the least altering the habit of mind of which false opinions are the result'. We in India have this brought home to us most vividly, by seeing the contradiction in the life of the educated. Their faith and their beliefs are in constant opposition to the knowledge of things and events imbibed in English schools and they do not know how to correlate them and thus bring harmony into their distracted lives. If they had been trained from

their childhood onwards to think for themselves, to demand proofs, to discriminate between fact and fiction, to discard the time-honoured crutches, their natural human instinct to discover things for themselves encouraged and not suppressed, they would not be such woeful specimens of the 'educated' beings as they often are. A person who succumbs to the force of mere reiterated assertions and is unable to sift grain from chaff may be the idol of multitudes and be vociferously cheered by his audiences, but is emphatically an uneducated person, in the broadest sense of the term, and a dangerous guide. Let the child then from its very schooldays get into the habit of grouping, classifying, and deducing for itself, and he will carry the habit with him through life and not fall an easy victim to the first plausible speaker.

SECTION (2)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND ITS DRAWBACKS.

The so-called religious education is seriously objectionable just because under the guise of religion it fills the fresh young mind with a lot of 'facts' of a very dubious nature and gives it a twist for all life. All teachings that are dogmatic, by their very natures stifle independent thinking. Autocracy and liberty can never co-exist in any sphere of life. By their very nature they are obnoxious to each other. Here in India we want at least five thousand Hindus to go out to America and to Europe every year for purposes of education, till the East has assimilated all that is best in the West. It is real education only, and not the counterfeit which is mostly passed for such, which can open the eyes of a man and make him perceive things in their correct proportions, undisturbed by narrow age-long prejudices; it is this that will teach him to sympathise with practices and ideals other than his own and engender the necessary tolerance and sympathy which would finally lead to the recognition of the brotherhood of humanity and lay the firm foundation of national unity on an impregnable basis.

This tolerance will effectually prevent any sect or community from doing anything to hurt the feelings of another. The Shiah will cease to pronounce the *tabarra* against the Sunni. The Sunni will not slaughter cows and defile temples with their blood and break

images and obstruct Hindu procession. The Hindu will not retaliate by throwing pigs into mosques and blowing conches at the hours of prayer. Nay, education, when widespread and rightly conducted, will have weakened many an undesirable feeling itself, and with the passing away of these feelings that take offence and give offence, the inducement that prompts to such irrational and even idiotic and culpable actions will vanish, leaving behind harmony and love, where before was discord and enmity. It will rouse a feeling of proper self-respect, and then only will be seen in its inner significance the meaning of such laws as would prevent an Indian from ever being anything more than 'a hewer of wood and drawer of water' in the Colonies, and hamper and humiliate him in endless ways in his own home, India. The people generally will then begin to see that if an Indian wishes to be treated as a man and an equal, and not to be hostled off the footpath and treated as a coolie, he must fit himself for civic responsibility and bring the pressure of obvious and unmistakable worth to bear on the Government, which he can only do when he is selfless and at the same time possessed of grit. The present jarring of units fritters away all strength and makes it impossible for helpers and leaders to do any substantial good. If they are to work for our redemption, then discipline and organisation, without which no co-operation is possible, must replace the present chaotic state, where there is plenty of ordering but no obeying. Not till we have realised that knowledge wins respect,

that the highest and truest knowledge is that which brings about such a full realisation of the inner unity and an active recognition of it in the relations of every-day life, the immediate result of which is a clear understanding of duty and the firm determination to perform it at any cost, not till then, shall we be able to grow into our birth-right.

These ideals have to be preached by day and by night throughout the length and the breadth of the land, and in every language that is spoken within its limits, so that no soul may be left whom the message has not reached. We should not rest till the imagination of the people as a whole is touched and they are all fired by a one-pointed zeal to raise their country to the first rank among the nations of the earth. Differences of language, of race, of custom, of religion have all to be submerged so far as they prove to be decisive hindrances, if we wish to see our country prosperous and respected. We must realise to the full, the real solidarity, the oneness, underlying all this external surface-difference. All artificial barriers raised for whatever purposes and by whomsoever must be cut down; their day is over. And, trampling upon these separative forces, inherited, not from the true ancient, but the confused middle past, let us stand forth as one and inseparable under the glorious light of the rising sun of sympathy and of love.

These are not merely 'counsels of perfection' and 'beautiful dreams of the future' to be listened to and then forgotten. They are stern realities and we dare

not neglect them. It is by the 'dreams' of a few that the world always advances, and it is for us, now that the 'dream' has been dreamed and given a 'name and form', to give it 'substance and materiality' and make it live once again in our beloved India. Croakers there will always be, but there is no need to heed their discordant cries and waver in our determination to go ahead and do our best to materialise our aspirations.

Let the present scattered units begin to come together, to coalesce. Let them learn to forget their many differences. Let them learn to give up their self-contained lives. We know only too well, that our manners and customs, our languages, our religions, nay our very origins, are diverse ; let us forget all these divisive factors and only remember that we are all Indians, inhabitants of one common mother country and bound together by the strong boards of a common political and economic interest ; even if we cannot rise in the immediate future to the sublime heights of human unity, as hymned by one of the Sankaracharyas.

विप्रोऽयं श्वपचोऽयमित्यपि महान् कोऽयं विभेदभ्रमः।
चाण्डालोऽस्तु स तु द्विजोऽस्तु गुरुरित्येषा मनीषा मम ॥

'This is a knower of the Vedas, that is a cooker of dog's flesh, whence this great divisive illusion ? Whether one is a Pariah or a Brahman matters not ; he is a teacher—such is my opinion'. The old Hindu, in theory at least, has always been a cosmopolitan—*Udaracharitanantu vasudhaiva kutumbakam* ; let

him be so now in practice. Let the teaching in that magnificent hymn of Pushpadanta filter down to our hearts. रुचीनां वैचित्र्याद् ऋजुकुटिलनानापथजुषां नृणामेको गम्य-स्त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव । May we realise in daily practice the splendid teaching that "while the paths are many they all lead to the same goal, for by whatever paths straight or devious a river goes it ultimately reaches the ocean," and that we are all children of the same Divinity, in spite of all differences of religious or social polity. Now is the time to gird up our loins and begin to clear away with resolute will and unhesitating hands the accumulated rubbish left behind by a past that is dead. Let us pray that the requisite strength be granted us to tread this thorny path of national greatness and that Divine Light be vouchsafed us to guide our faltering steps through the dark and dense jungle-growth of long ages of bigotry and superstition.

निन्दन्तु नीतिनिपुणा यदि वा स्तुवन्तु
लक्ष्मीः समाविशतु गच्छतु वा यथेष्टम् ।
अद्यैव वा मरणमस्तु युगान्तरे वा
न्याय्यात् पथः प्रविचलन्ति पदन्न धीराः ॥

भर्तृहरि ।

'I dreamed
'That stone by stone I reared a sacred fane,
Not temple, nor pagoda, mosque, nor church
But loftier, simpler, always open-doored,
To every breath from heaven ; and truth and peace,
And love and justice came and dwelt therein.'

Tennyson.

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